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# JAPAN'S MARTYR CHURCH



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LAURENCE O'LOUGHLIN.



Bernard, Mary, Sister

# JAPAN'S MARTYR CHURCH

BY  
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BAR CONVENT, YORK



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## PREFACE.

THE Catholic Church never grows old, for her soul is the Eternal Spirit of God. She can never rest or remain inactive as long as a nation needs the Gospel or a soul, sanctification. She is always engaged in carrying out her God-appointed task : " Go teach all nations, preach the Gospel to every creature." Here, her work progresses, there, it is retarded ; at one period whole peoples accept the faith, at another large numbers reject it ; but through success and through failure the Church's work goes on and the wide world is the field of her labours. In all her history there are few chapters more inspiring and none more entrancing than the story of the rise and decline of Christianity in Japan in the sixteenth century. While the reformers were engaged in their attempts to destroy the ancient faith in England and Germany, the saintly Jesuit missionaries were establishing it in Japanese kingdoms, and succeeded in adding 150,000 members to the Church in less than a quarter of a century—members who, on the whole, so lived their faith that theirs might be fitly called the Church of the elect.

The history of that Church reveals many wonders : the intricate and extraordinary workings of God's Providence, the sudden transformations wrought by grace, the striking conversion of kings and princes, the persevering fervour of the multitude of converts, the heroic sanctity of numerous souls and the irresistible force of divine truth on the lips of a St. Francis Xavier.

It tells us of apostles like Torres, Fernandez and Villella, whose personal holiness was the best proof of the divinity of the religion they taught ; of martyrs like Father Angelis and Father Navarro, worthy successors in work, zeal and self-denial of their saintly leader. As we read the record of the lives, labours, and sufferings of these men of God and of the fervour and fortitude of the people on whom they poured the saving waters of Baptism, we feel as if we were back in the days of St. Paul among the early Christians.

Our history shows us, too, the Church manifesting in a new sphere all her essential characteristics : her love for God's truth, her zeal for souls, her pity for the fallen ; her charity to the poor, the helpless, and the suffering ; her motherly care of the little ones of the flock, teaching them in her own schools the doctrine of their faith, and inspiring them with such love of it that from their early years they cherished the desire to die for it, and even regularly prayed for the grace of martyrdom. It is in the careful religious training given to the children by their zealous Jesuit pastors that we find the secret of Japanese fervour and constancy.

How definite the lead, how clear the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the work begun in Japan by St. Francis Xavier ! How rapid in its progress, how blessed in its fruits ! What piety, what saintly heroism in these Catholic people of Japan ! What promise for the future ! Yet how short-lived the glory, how swift the decline ! God's ways are mysterious, but we may be confident that in His own time the seed of the martyrs' blood sown so thickly in Japan three hundred years ago will bear its abundant fruit.

✠THOMAS SHINE,  
*Bishop of Lamus, Middlesbrough.*

## WRITER'S PREFACE

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THIS small work was undertaken in response to a request of the President of the Catholic Women's Missionary League. She regretted the lack of popular volumes on the various Foreign Missions, and hoped that some day a library of this kind might be formed. Towards this end, the writer has aimed at reproducing in a succinct form, the outstanding features in the history of the Church in Japan. Whilst availing herself of the ancient well-known sources, she has striven to bring the work up to date. For this she is indebted to the late revered Bishop Casartelli, who kindly corrected her typograph, and to the Rev. Francis Xavier Iwashita of Tokyo who contributed all the matter about modern Catholicism in Japan of to-day.

If this slight sketch of a sublime epic should arouse in her readers a prayerful interest in Japan, the writer's highest aspirations will have been fulfilled.

Sr. M. B.



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# JAPAN'S MARTYR CHURCH

## CHAPTER I.

### LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE

WHY is it that China is so dear to the Heart of God? Was there ever a saint seized with hunger for souls, that did not turn his eyes to China? St. Francis Xavier was seized with this divine affamishment. China haunted him by day, and at night it filled the landscape of his dreams. Its mysterious race, silent and concentrated, wove itself into his prayers, and insinuated itself into his superhuman austerities. Yet it seemed as if the seal of consecration could only be put on his glorious labours, when stripped of every fibre of self. God chose therefore not China, but Japan, to be the crowning triumph of his apostolate. Truly no man was better suited to appeal to a race brilliantly intellectual, and with a courtesy and refinement which savoured more of Christ than of Confucius. And it was by no special revelation nor Papal Mandate that the Divine Will was manifested to our Apostle, but by a mere chance.

One day when he was in Malacca, a Japanese noble in direst anguish of soul, came and threw himself at his feet, begging for that peace and forgiveness, which only the bonze of the White God could give. St. Francis' heart overflowed with joy. As he took into his healing embrace the man of contrite heart, he felt an assurance, that in that hour had been laid the foundation stone of the Church of Japan. After long prayer and preparation, Anjiro was baptised under the name of Paul of the Holy Faith, and his two servants as Anthony and John. The more St. Francis conversed with these men, now so filled with the Holy Ghost, the more his heart turned to Japan. He saw that fair country held tight in the toils of the Old Serpent, whose hideous sinuosity they emblazoned in gold and jewels on their garments and dwellings. Oh, that he could wrest them, from that enslaving clutch!

Two years were to pass in waiting and many months in tears and prayers before the Divine Will was clearly manifested to him. Once known, no opposition, nor argument could shake his purpose. Taking with him Father Cosmo de Torres and a lay brother, John Fernandez, and Paul and his two servants, he braved four thousand miles of sea voyage with all its perils of tempest and pirates. In the port of Malacca were lying

several Portuguese merchantmen, who vied with one another to convey the saint, if only as an insurance to their merchandize. But, impatient of a moment's delay, he took passage in the so-called robber's junk, an infamous vessel, belonging to a notorious Chinese pirate and sorcerer.

Behold therefore the great conqueror of kingdoms, who had robbed Satan of whole countries and races, starting for his final conquest in the devil's own vessel. Daily and hourly was Satan worshipped on the deck, and many were the diabolic attempts to kill the Apostle or to frustrate his journey. But God overruled wind and weather and satanic machination, and wafted the robber's junk into the one port in Japan most favourable for the work of his servant. Imagine the joy of Paul when he found the vessel landed on the very shores of his native place and home, Kagoshima, whence he had fled in remorse a few years before.

It was on the 15th of August, 1549, that the Apostle set foot on Japanese soil. And having ever confided all his toils to the Mother of God, he counted this as an omen of great joy. A few hours after, Paul was summoned to the place where the Chieftain of Satsuma listened with keenest interest to his account of the Indies. But his interest grew into awe and wonder, when he heard the sublime tenets of the new religion. Thereupon Paul displayed a picture of Our Lady and the Divine Infant, given to him for this purpose by Father Francis, which inspired such reverence that the ruler and all his court went down on their knees before it. The royal mother and her ladies being sent for, they also prostrated and remained thus for some time. Then they asked Paul a thousand questions about the lovely Virgin and Child. The Princess even asked for a copy of the picture and a written account of the chief tenets of the Christian religion.

It was on the feast of St. Michael, he who ever thrusts down to hell Satan and all his wicked angels, that St. Francis Xavier appeared before the Prince-Chieftain and his Princess. Every mark of honour was shown him, and immense was the admiration for the disinterestedness of the European Bonze, who came to Japan not for gold nor wealth, but to show them the way to Life Eternal. Far into the night the royal pair talked about this strange new religion. The Prince not only allowed it to be preached in his dominions, but his subjects were given full liberty to embrace it. "But if your faith be true," he added, "be careful of your books and writings, for the demons are sure to attack you with utmost fury, and to wreak all their malicious vengeance on you."

But how was our saint to teach in a tongue which takes scholars seventeen years to acquire perfectly? True, God had given him the gift of tongues, and he had preached and conversed in thirty different dialects in India. But not daring to hope again for the Pentecostal gift, he set to work to learn Japanese, and left the issue to God. He spent forty days at this task, by the help of Paul, mastering in that tongue the chief doctrines and prayers of our religion. After which effort God gave him in an instant such a grasp of the language that he understood and spoke it like a born Japanese, with ease and elegance. Furthermore, natives of different countries each understood his preaching as if in their own dialect. And to cope with the bonzes, a still greater gift was given him. He would answer twenty or thirty dissimilar and erudite questions, hurled at him by them, with one response which answered perfectly each man's difficulty.

To a people who paid high cult to honour and wealth, and who despised and dreaded poverty and shame, an object lesson was needed on the reverse values of the "Jesus-Religion." The first, therefore, in Japan privileged to enter the Kingdom of Christ was quite a poor man, to whom the saint gave the name of Bernard in baptism. A religion which exalted shame and poverty into a beatitude must indeed be of heaven! So the house of Paul where the apostles lodged was besieged by crowds who came to hear the good tidings of salvation. But as it was the priestly class in Judea, who everywhere hindered the Divine Sower from sowing the Word of Truth, so to His servant was reserved the same sort of persecution. The growing esteem for Christianity roused the deep-seated hatred of the bonzes, who stirred up a violent opposition against him. One of them even told a large crowd, who were listening to him preaching, that he was a devil in human form. But the Japanese were too keen-witted not to be able to distinguish between truth and error, and great numbers embraced the faith. They came over, not in a body, but singly and individually, and after sifted inquiry and intellectual conviction. And the Divine Master helped on the work by miracles akin to those He had worked Himself.

One day meeting on the coast some poor fishermen who had laboured long and fruitlessly, the Saint, touched with pity, prayed and blessed the sea. Their next haul brought in such an immense draught of fishes that they were amazed. And from thenceforth the hitherto barren sea of Kagoshima yielded fish in abundance.

We hear also of the blind seeing, the lame walking, lepers being cleansed, storms being appeased. But most celebrated of all was the miracle of the raising to life of the only daughter

of a Japanese nobleman. Not only are the incidents like those of the Jairus-story, but even the words of the Master are used by the Saint. Except that here the girl raised to life came to meet her father, and seeing the two Jesuits exclaimed, "These are my deliverers." She then related how after death two demons had seized her, and were about to cast her into a fiery abyss when two strangers of noble and venerable mien intervened and saved her. And the father and all his household believed.

This wonder was soon noised abroad, and filled the bonzes with re-doubled fury. They heaped the foulest opprobrium on St. Francis. They even hired wretches to annoy him day and night, so that by horrid noises, stoning and petty injuries of every kind, they might hinder his preaching. But nothing ruffled the sweet serenity of our Saint; and thus with his meekness he conquered everywhere a bonze-ridden race. At last the most influential of the bonzes were deputed to face the Prince and reproach him thus: "O sire! into what distant land is it that thou art pleased that the great and terrible gods of thy fathers should be banished? For their temples are deserted, and they are departing from thy kingdom. And what will they who come after say? What will they feel when they are told that it was the prince of Satsuma on whom these very gods had bestowed his crown and sceptre, who overthrew their altars, and despoiled them of the honours that they had so long enjoyed? And what will not the princes thy neighbours be emboldened to attempt against thee? Nay, what may not thy own subjects proceed to do?"

"For all things are lawful against one who has insulted and done violence to the gods."

With so great a fear was the Prince of Satsuma seized that he issued a decree forbidding his subjects, under pain of death, to abandon the religion of their fathers. For this Prince's toleration of Christianity had sprung from a hope of capturing European commerce, and from no real inward conviction of heart. But not such was the faith of those hundreds of subjects of his, who had become fervent followers of Christ. Death and disfavour was nought to them. Daily the apostle assembled them to perfect in their lives and minds the life of Jesus. Then, amid loud lamentations he departed with his companions from Kagoshima, leaving this small band of his first Japanese converts under the care of Paul of the Holy Faith. Among these were two bonzes. Bare-footed, carrying on his back the altar of sacrifice, Francis Xavier turned to Hirado, where he knew the Portuguese were in harbour. But God led his steps to a rock-fortress, eighteen miles from Kagoshima, which belonsed to a vassal of the chieftain, a prince



called Ekandono. With its ten bastions and surrounding moat of precipices it was not only impregnable but unapproachable, except by a narrow sentry-guarded path. The whole of the palace was cut out of the living rock, and consisted of galleries, chambers, halls, all of great sculptured beauty.

Taking advantage of the generous hospitality of the prince, Father Francis began at once to show him and his the way to Life Eternal. So struck were these pagans by the wonderful tidings of joy, and by the holiness of him who delivered the message, that seventeen soldiers asked for baptism. The saving waters were also allowed to the princess and her son, the prince only refraining out of fear of his lord and suzerain.

Among the neophytes was an old man of great virtue and prudence, the steward of the household. To him did Father Francis entrust this infant flock, giving him a written form of baptism, an explanation of the Creed, a short life of Our Lord, the seven penitential psalms, and the litany of the saints. A room in the palace was set aside for prayers, and so faithfully were the saint's directions followed that, thirteen years after, Brother Louis Almeida found they had not swerved a hair's breadth from their first fervour, and had increased to a hundred. Of the riches of his poverty Father Francis gave two gifts on leaving Ekandono. One was an old purse with prayers and litanies copied out by his own hand. Many and great were the miracles worked by this purse, which the princess lent to all who were sick and suffering, and cured thereby her own husband. To the old steward he left his discipline, which also became a plentiful source of healing and restored the princess to life. Every Friday the fervent children of the saint used his discipline, until this instrument of penance became so worn out that the steward allowed only three gentle strokes from it, the more violent flagellations being taken with other disciplines.

The Saint preached next at Kaneda where he baptized the daughter of the Chief, who fifty years after was found a staunch Christian, and Michael, who with the Saint's rosary and his gift of a porcelain vase worked innumerable miracles.

After terrible hardships of travel and privation the Saint and his two companions arrived at Hirado. Here he was received with salute of guns from the Portuguese ships, and with flags flying and ensigns. Amid blasts of trumpets and shouts of joy they conducted him to the royal palace. But no elation was seen in that meek and lowly bearing. If he rejoiced, it was because the honour given to the ambassador redounded to the Master.

The Chief having heard much of the famous European bonze, showed him the greatest respect, and allowed him to preach the

Name of Jesus in the Kingdom of Hirado. And God so blessed his labours there that in twenty days he made more converts than in the whole year at Kagoshima. Having raised a little church on the shore, he left his neophytes in charge of Father Torres, and in the end of October directed his steps to the capital of Japan, Miako. With him went Brothers Fernandez, Bernard, Matthew, and another Japanese. Their way lay through Yamaguchi, chief city of the Kingdom of Nagato. This capital, the richest in Japan, was steeped in such unutterable depravity that our Saint, filled with the horror at so much sinfulness, began to lift up his voice in denunciation. The Japanese at first listened thunderstruck to the condemnation of their way of living. Such virtue as this man preached, and a religion so contrary to theirs, was simply incredible. They ran after him pelting him with stones, and jeering said: "See two bonzes who would inveigle us into worshipping one only God and being content with one wife only!" they said in derision. The Chief summoned the white bonzes of this pure religion into his presence. Surrounded by his court, he asked an account of this strange teaching, and listened in deep silence to the words of the Saint. Then without comment, but with a courteous gesture, he dismissed them from his presence. If cleanness of heart is a requisite for seeing God, then Yamaguchi, steeped in impurity, was utterly impervious to the Vision. Afflicted to tears, and weary with his weeks of fruitless preaching, our great Apostle started for Miako.

In the summer the journey could have been accomplished in a fortnight. But now at the end of summer the band of missionaries were exposed to continual storms of wind, snow, hail, and perils of every kind. Their road lay now through dark gloomy forests, now over rugged mountains, where they were in constant danger of being precipitated into the torrents which rushed through the valleys beneath. In some places the road was so covered with ice that they slipped at every step and were in imminent peril of being crushed to death by the enormous icicles that detached themselves from the crags and came dashing down upon their path. Laden with the altar and church plate, they had to ford swollen streams and broad rivers. Ill-clad and unprovisioned, a bag of rice that Bernard carried in his sleeve was all they had for nutriment. Their tribulations were added to by Bernard's lack of topography, for he kept constantly leading them astray. Once, when they were completely entangled in a dense wood, they were overtaken by a horseman who promised to guide them on condition that they carried his box. Such an offer suited only too well our

humble Saint who, laden with the box, followed the guide. This malicious man trotted so rapidly that Francis had to run to keep up with him, and this the whole day. In the evening his companions found him, with legs so swollen, and feet so bruised and torn that they begged him to rest a few days at Sakai. Yet his sweet composure remained unalterable and his brightness shone forth more conspicuously in this suffering and delay. "Deos, Deos, Deos!" he would repeat in accents of such tenderness that even the pagans began to feel the adoration and love due to that Holy Name. Often that Holy Name was reviled, and little children would run after him shouting derisively, "Deos, Deos, Deos!" Once some wicked idolaters flung the Saint to the ground and dragged him without the walls to stone him. But a sudden darkness came on and such terrific thunder and lightning that they fled terrified to their homes. But the man of God arose composedly, and thanking heaven for his deliverance, went on his way.

At last Miako was reached. Situated in a spacious plain and sheltered by an amphitheatre of hills, its stately streets crossed each other at right angles. It had five hundred temples and was the seat of the government. A word of explanation is necessary on the curious state of the Japanese government at this time.

There had been Emperors or Mikados from as far back as 660 B.C. But at the close of the twelfth century of our era the all-powerful minister Yoritomo constituted himself the virtual head of the State, and thus established the system of government known as Shogunate, which lasted till 1868. The Shogun was commander-in-chief of the forces and also vicerent of the Empire, whilst the real sovereign was considered the spiritual head or Dairi. He received all outward show of reverence and even delegated power to his Shogun or vicerent. Owing to civil wars the capital was mostly in ruins. Even whilst St. Francis was walking its streets there was the din and bustle of a fresh war, for all the vassals had risen against their Over-lord. Sensuality had made deaf the people of Yamaguchi; war lust had closed the ears of the haughty inhabitants of Miako. Our Saint was not to be daunted either by toil or discouragement. But after a fortnight's fruitless work he turned his back on Miako and returned to Yamaguchi.

God alone knows what sufferings were involved in these journeys to and fro. Father Torres says: "Were I to attempt to describe the vituperation, the insults, the hunger, the cold, endured by him and by us his companions, I should never come to an end." If the Church chants, "How beautiful are the

footsteps!" and kisses the feet of her missionaries that are to bear the tidings of salvation to the heathen, what did the angels of Japan sing as they counted the footsteps of St. Francis Xavier? Emaciated, in thread-bare garb, he traversed their mountains, casting to right and left the fire of his love. Had not his Father Ignatius sent him with only one word, "Go, and set all on fire!" Truly was he doing so, for never did a man more perfectly fulfil a parting mandate. It was not difficult to count his footsteps; for they were marked in blood on the mountain-tops, and the inextricable briars in his path clutched and tore shreds from his ragged habit as if esteeming it a more glorious adornment than the choicest exotics of Japan. But let us not waste our pity on our Saint for the heavy sacrifice demanded of him. It was the purchase-money of that vast army of souls that he had come to save, and he grudged it not, for with sacrifice always comes heavenly delectation. And even in the midst of his tribulations our Saint used to shed such abundant tears of delight that he was wont to cry out: "Enough, O Lord, enough!" lest joy should break the frail vessel of his heart.

After four months' absence from Yamaguchi, most of which time was spent in journeyings, our Apostle returned thither. Once more approaching the Chief, he did so in a more diplomatic manner. Knowing how the Japanese scorned his poverty-stricken appearance, he donned a new garment and armed himself with some rare gifts given him by the governor of the Indies. Among these was a striking clock and a harpsichord, which he presented to the Chief. Most highly were they appreciated by the ruler who sent to Father Francis in return a large sum of gold. Not a penny of this would the Apostle touch; but for sole favour he asked that he might freely preach the Word of God in his dominions. Struck with such unheard-of disinterestedness the Chief exclaimed: "How unlike to our covetous priests is this European Bonze! So passionately fond of money are they that they care for nothing but their worldly interests." He assigned to these noble strangers a monastery of the Bonzes, then uninhabited, and set up in the squares and street corners a royal edict that all might freely embrace the European religion, and severe penalties would be inflicted on any who molested the white bonzes.

And now was beheld a transformation so astounding that from a divine source alone could it come. Yamaguchi—the richest and most dissolute city in Japan, where things were done that it beseemeth the Saints not to mention—first listened, and was then won by the teaching of Christ. In two months the Saint himself baptised 500 souls, and in the course of the year 3,000



chosen ones, all picked souls, were gathered into the True Fold. And so eager were these people to learn the truth that day and night he was besieged by inquiring crowds. The disputations with the bonzes were so many that Father Francis had neither time to eat nor sleep. It was in one of these that occurred that tremendous Pentecostal miracle. To a dozen and dissimilar and vociferated questions he would, with one answer, solve each problem. He would also in the morning preach perfectly in Chinese, and in the evening with equal ease and elegance expound in Japanese the doctrine of Christianity. And the preaching of the Word was spread by signs, the path of the Saint being marked by the blind seeing, the lame walking, and the dumb speaking. But a more powerful sermon than his miracles and preaching was the humility, gentleness, and sweetness of this man who commanded the winds and waves. In a few months it had changed the most dissolute city in Japan, where obscenity, scurrility and foolish talking were the order of the day. Now, on the contrary, whether in private houses or in academies or public squares, the one engrossing topic was Jesus Christ, and His Life the one absorbing study. Nor did it end in talk. For the new converts put on the mind and manners of Jesus Christ and proved by the self-denial of their lives how hateful to them had become their former profligacy. The making of the sign of the cross became to them a sensible delight, and the least rite of the Church was a source of benediction.



## CHAPTER II.

## JOYS OF THE APOSTOLATE

THE Great Apostle himself tells us what his feelings were at such abundant harvests: "Although my head is hoary white I am more vigorous and robust than ever I was. For the labour of instructing an intellectual people, who love the truth and desire salvation, is a source of inconceivable joy to me. In the course of my whole life I have never tasted so much joy as at Yamaguchi where, by the Prince's permission, multitudes came to listen to me. I saw the pride of the bonzes humbled, and their haughtiness subdued; and the most cruel enemies of the Name of Christ were subjected to Him. I saw the transports of joy with which these new Christians returned in triumph, after vanquishing the bonzes in disputation; and I was no less delighted in witnessing the diligence with which they vied with one another in labouring to convince the pagans, the pleasure they took in recounting their successes, and by what arguments and means they mastered their prejudices and put to flight their heathen superstitions. All this caused me such overflowing joy that I lost all sense of my own trials and afflictions. If only I could impart a share of my happiness to all the colleges of Europe, I am certain that the young students there would come over in vast numbers to spend their talents and their strength for the benefit of these heathens. If only they could but once taste the sweetness of the heavenly delights experienced in the task of teaching and converting them!" There were two bitter drops in this cup of joy. One was that whilst the Chief was intellectually convinced of the truth, he failed to grasp it because of his sensuality. Another was that so generous a host and friend as Prince Neatondono dared not embrace Christianity for fear of the bonzes. Nevertheless, the fire cast on Japan by the Saint became enkindled more and more rapidly, consuming in its course all earthly pollution.

One day, when Brother Fernandez was preaching in public, a low fellow spat derisively in his face. At this wanton brutality a cry of indignation broke forth from the spectators. But the preacher, without betraying the least emotion, meekly wiped his face and proceeded with his sermon. In his meekness he fulfilled the beatitude, and conquered there and then, on the spot, a great army of souls. A learned bonze declared himself a Christian, and was there and then baptized. Many of the younger bonzes left their monasteries, and with tears denounced the crimes and secret abominations of those whitened sepulchres

with whom their lot had been hitherto cast. One of the most learned men in Yamaguchi, and the implacable foe of Christianity, on seeing such self-mastery, exclaimed : "That religion must be divine which imparts to its followers strength to practise virtue impossible to nature alone, and gives to its preachers such utter disinterestedness as these Christain bonzes have."

After a long public eulogium of the new religion, he begged baptism at the hands of Father Francis. Unbounded was the joy of Francis at receiving a convert of such influence. And, as he hoped, many of the highest rank and erudition followed in his train, each one a picked neophyte and a potential martyr for his faith. Indeed, in the course of a year, Yamaguchi could reckon 3,000 Christians, equal in fervour and faith to the Christians of the primitive Church. Each had been an individual conquest and after much reasoning and questioning. Whereas in India, whole villages with thousands of low caste tribes came over simultaneously after one sermon. Such marvellous conquests could not be allowed to pass unchallenged by the bonzes, who had fallen into contempt and odium with even women and children. They noised abroad that Christianity was a conspiracy against the throne ; that Francis Xavier worked his miracles by the devil ; they thus so intimidated the Prince that though he did not revoke the royal edict he secretly oppressed and persecuted the Christians by imprisonment, confiscation of goods, deprivation of all office and honour.

Following therefore the divine counsel, Francis, persecuted in one city, fled to another. Hearing that some Portuguese ships had arrived at the port of Funai in the kingdom of Bungo, he set out laden with the altar of sacrifice. He took with him five Japanese converts, two were young nobles whose property had been confiscated, the others were Bernard, Matthew and Lawrence. Four miles from Figen the Saint was so exhausted and ill, his feet so blistered and swollen with his journey of 800 miles, that he was unable to proceed. He sent on three of his companions who returned with de Gama, commander of the vessel. He was accompanied by a cavalcade of several Portuguese gentlemen who, seeing the toil-worn Saint painfully journeying on, dismounted and asked his blessing. And as he would not mount a horse, they walked by his side as a bodyguard into Figen. At this port de Gama's ship had been gaily decked with banners, pennons and waving flags. On deck all the crew were drawn up in glittering armour, and the moment the Saint appeared cannons boomed salutes in his honour. The noise of the firing so frightened the Prince and court that they sent to ask whether there were pirates in sight. What was the amaze-

ment of the royal messenger on learning that all this honour was due to the meanly-clad man whom the bonzes of Yamaguchi had described worthy of all contempt. And greater still his surprise on hearing from the commander that this man, though noble and of great wealth, had freely despoiled himself of all things in order to be a preacher of the Kingdom of Heaven, and that in order to impart eternal life to the Japanese, he had undergone prodigious labours and done heroic deeds. So struck was the messenger that he told the prince that the Portuguese valued this man more than if their vessel were laden with ingots of gold.

The Prince of Bungo was only twenty, he was intelligent and generous, but addicted to the grossest sensuality learned from the bonzes. He sent a most cordial invitation to the Saint, begging him to make known to the haughty nobles his God, who alone was God of gods. And this remarkable epistle was sent by a prince of the blood-royal, attended by thirty young nobles of the court, whose astonishment was great at seeing so poor a man command the obedience and respect of all these wealthy merchants. They therefore told their prince that to the European bonze a far greater respect must be given than to their priests. Seeing that poverty was held in such contempt by the Japanese, Father Francis was prevailed upon for once to lay aside the externals of his beloved poverty. Arrayed then in fine cassock and surplice, with a green stole embroidered with gold, he went to the court. Thirty Portuguese gentlemen richly attired with gold chains round their necks escorted him. The yacht conveying him was hung with costliest Chinese tapestry, while the smaller boats following discoursed music and bore flying pennons. On landing, a procession was formed, the commander going bare-headed and holding the wand of office. Five Portuguese followed, one carrying the Father's catechism in a white silk bag, another a cane tipped with gold, the third a pair of black velvet slippers, the fourth a picture of Our Lady wrapped in a scarf of violet damask, the fifth a magnificent parasol such as is used in Japan only for persons of highest rank. Then came the Saint himself, meek and humble in demeanour, but with all the dignity befitting a divine messenger.

At the palace gates six hundred of the royal guard stood, and opened a passage to allow the cortège to enter. The various objects being offered to the Saint, he was led into a hall filled with Japanese nobles in richest apparel. Here a little child led by an old man made a speech of profuse welcome, and taking Father Francis by the hand led him into the next hall. There, in shining attire, were assembled the young scions of nobility.

With profound bows and effusive greeting, he was led through a terrace fragrant with orange trees to a tapestry-hung hall, where the highest nobles saluted him. Here the Prince's brother with marked respect, said : " This day is a most solemn festival to all the court. In possessing you, our Lord the Prince deems himself richer and more fortunate than if all the silver of the thirty-two treasuries of China were at his command. In the meantime I wish you an increase of glory, and the accomplishment of those desires which have brought you hither from so great a distance." Taking him by the hand through an ante-chamber, he ushered him into the presence of the Prince. The Ruler rose to meet the Saint and bowed low even to the ground. Father Francis likewise prostrated, and would have touched the royal foot but the Prince lifted him up and made him sit beside him. After the usual courtesies and ceremonies our Apostle began to declare the truths of religion, to which the Prince and his son listened spell-bound. Then the young monarch burst out into high eulogium : " Why has God permitted us to live so long in darkness, whilst this man has the light and full knowledge of the truth ? "

Fashendono, a chief bonze, a haughty and vicious man, openly rebuked the Prince's praise of Christianity and expatiated on the holiness practised by the bonzes. With true Japanese self-control the Prince remained unmoved at the rebuff ; but suppressed titters broke from the court at the enumeration of bonze virtues, so patent were their vices. With a curse on the Prince, this insolent bonze left the court.

On Francis refusing to dine with the Prince the young monarch said : " My Friend and Father, I know well you have no need of my table ; but if you were a Japanese you would know that a ruler cannot give a greater sign of his favour and good-will than by inviting anyone to eat with him. I love you and desire to show my love. Therefore, O Father Bonze, you must needs dine with me. I shall hereby receive a greater honour than I bestow." Francis bowing low kissed the royal scimitar, a mark of profoundest respect in Japan, and said : " I entreat the God of Heaven to reward your Majesty for the kindnesses you have shown me by bestowing on you the light of faith and all Christian virtues, to the end you may serve God faithfully during life, and enjoy Him eternally after death." Then the Prince embraced the Saint and hoped they might be together in Heaven.

The bonzes present at all these outward marks of esteem were choking with stifled rage. And more so when they saw how all these honours brought great multitudes to hear the Apostle. Whole days and nights were spent in instructing and baptizing,



so that his Portuguese friends remonstrated on the physical strain to which he was subjecting his body. He would beg them not to mind it, for his meat and drink and sleep were to snatch souls from the slavery of Satan.

Among the most remarkable conversions was that of Sakai Eeran. He was a bonze of great celebrity. Smarting under the many defeats his colleagues had sustained, he challenged Xavier to a public disputation before a great concourse of people. The truth so powerfully and clearly explained by our Saint at last enlightened the soul of the old man. Touched by the Holy Ghost he fell upon his knees before that vast assembly, and lifting up his eyes to heaven he cried aloud, whilst tears streamed down his face : " O Jesus Christ, the true and only Son of God, I submit to Thee. I confess from my heart and with my mouth declare that Thou art God Eternal and Almighty. I earnestly desire the pardon of those to whom I have so often taught for truth, what I here acknowledge and declare to be only forgeries and fables." At this extraordinary conversion 500 asked for baptism, which the Saint deferred till he had well exercised them in Christian virtues. At the same time St. Francis had, in a few months, changed the whole tone of the court ; salutary laws in favour of the poor, who had hitherto been abhorred, were passed ; infanticide was put down, and vice and infamy punished and prohibited.

Whilst things were progressing so favourably at Funai, the bonzes at Yamaguchi had succeeded in raising an insurrection, in which the Prince (that they might not fall into the hands of the rebels) killed his son and then himself. Though the rebels searched high and low for Father Torres and Brother Fernandez, they were baulked by the wife of a chief, who had concealed them so successfully. When, to the great joy of the Christians, quiet was restored, the brother of the Prince of Bungo was chosen to be Prince of Yamaguchi.

The Great Apostle had now been two years and four months in Japan, fifty days of which had been spent in Funai, in the Kingdom of Bungo. Great was the grief of the Prince on hearing of his departure, for he loved Father Francis as a father. The chains of the flesh hindered him from embracing Christianity, then. But his esteem for the new religion was very marked, and several years after, like St. Augustine, he made the great renunciation. He took in baptism the name of Francis, and was foremost among the saints of Japan. Wherever Francis put his foot it was as a conqueror. This fact so infuriated the bonzes that they determined to make a final effort to overthrow him. To this end they invited to Funai a



celebrated bonze, called Fucarandono, promising him if triumphant, to carry him back on their shoulders to his monastery.

Just as the farewell interview between the Father and the Prince was ending, there arrived at the palace the retinue of bonzes headed by their chief. The Prince was much troubled at this inopportune challenge, for he feared a defeat for his father and friend from the formidable foe. But the Saint, reading his thoughts, said : " Trouble not yourself for me, O Prince ! The law I teach is no earthly science ; neither can all the bonzes of Japan, nor all the scholars of the world prevail against it any more than the shades of night can withstand the beams of the rising sun." The dispute began. So completely and at every point was Fucarandono defeated, that he burst out into coarse and revolting abuse. His insolence roused the anger of the Prince and the court, who bade his removal by force. In revenge for this overthrow, the bonzes closed all the temples, saying the angry gods could only be appeased by the expulsion of the Portuguese. These fled in terror to their ships. But Francis remained unmoved to all their entreaties, saying he was as much bound to guard his infant flock as they their merchandize ; and that to die for Christ was a privilege he was unworthy of. Courage is infectious. So come what might, all were determined to stay with the Saint and face all odds. But before their ships were brought back to the harbour the Prince had quelled the riot and restored peace. Fucarandono renewed the disputations, which went on for several days, ending always in deadly defeat to bonzeism. To the hero of victory the Prince showed marked and public tokens of favour, walking hand in hand with him through the streets and conversing with him on all occasions.

The day of departure came at last. On November 21st, 1551, we see once more repeated the scene of St. Paul's farewell at Ephesus. What were the Saint's thoughts as he gazed for the last time on that dreamland of beauty, Japan ? He has left us no word of its elfish and delusive charm, of its iridescent atmosphere, and of its opalesque skies. Not once has he mentioned its glowing vesture of bud and blossom, its hanging gardens and terraced fields, its leaping rivers and snow-capped mountains. Well enough is it for us little souls to be bewitched by the fringe of God's garments. This giant saw none of it, so absorbed was he in gazing on the Deity, so intent in restoring that Divine Semblance—however blurred and defiled—in human souls. How resplendently he had caused it to shine forth in these his beloved Japanese, his joy and his delight, his crown and his consolation ! Even by nature he considered they surpassed in

goodness any of the nations he had discovered. What they were to do by grace, and how they were to vie with the Christians of the Golden Age, he would know and see only from his high place above. For never again was the Saint to set foot in Japan, nor to finish the work so gloriously begun.

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## CHAPTER III.

## A JAPANESE AGAPE

EIGHT months after St. Francis Xavier had left Japan, there landed there a little band of missionaries. He had sent them ; it was his last token of solicitude for the land of his heart, and the last thought of his life was for Japan.

The Prince of Bungo received them with the same kindness he had always showed the Saint. But they made no long stay there, proceeding at once to Yamaguchi where they wished to confer with Father Torres on the affairs of the mission. Great was the joy of the Fathers at this meeting. Each vied with the other in the end common to them all, the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls. Christmas was celebrated with unusual solemnity and gladness, for were they not chosen to be the Peace Angels, who were to announce peace to a benighted people ? As Father Torres at midnight celebrated the Divine Mysteries, great and deep was the devotion of these neophytes, so that the whole night hardly sufficed for the fullest expression of their adoration.

The next day they were all invited to dine with the Fathers, and now was seen as in Rome that unique miracle of love, which only Christianity can engender. The rich and noble, who, in Japan above all other places, contemned the poor and the destitute, now not only sat side by side with them in this Feast of love, but even waited on their lowly neighbours. Truly indeed was the Christ-child thus honoured, Who being Lord of all, disdained not to become poor and serve us as servant of us all. After this refreshing fraternal intercourse the missionaries separated for their several fields of labour. Even Father Torres, on account of a sudden outbreak of revolution, was forced to leave Yamaguchi. Before this sad parting from a flock so dear to him he had a great consolation.

Two bonzes renowned for wisdom and learning had been in the habit of attending his public instruction, and had long conceived an admiration for the religion he preached. One day, hearing him mention St. Paul, they asked some questions which drew from him a sketch of the conversion and labours of the Great Apostle. Charmed with the inspired narrative, the most celebrated of them, unable to conceal any longer his conviction, turned to the people and exclaimed : " Behold, O Japanese ! I am also a Christian ! And as I have hitherto imitated Paul by my opposition to Jesus, so will I follow Him henceforth, by preaching Him to the heathen. And you my friend, " he added,

turning to his companion, "come with me; and since together we have disseminated error, now together let us teach the truth." The Holy Ghost coming down in abundant measure upon both neophytes they knelt before Father Torres, and asked for baptism, one taking the name of Paul and the other Barnabas. Straightway the two bonze-neophytes began to imitate their patrons in a devouring zeal for souls and in a thirst for self-denial. Paul especially fasted rigorously, lay on the bare ground with a stone for his pillow, rose to pray at midnight, and at break of day went into the villages to preach. He had this advantage over his Jesuit Father that, having been a bonze himself, he could without fear of contradiction, lay bare the impostures of his former associates.

In 1557 Paul was sent with Father Gago to preach before the Prince of Hirado. Among the thousands converted during this mission was a relative of the monarch Matsuura, the noble Lord Koteda. He was baptized together with his wife and son, taking the names of Anthony and John. At a later period all three distinguished themselves by their courage in maintaining the faith which they diligently propagated around them. They rank amongst the most zealous and faithful Christians who adorned the Church in Japan. Anthony was the governor of two islands near Hirado. Here the missionaries laboured with such happy results, that in a short time the whole population was converted, and the three churches which were erected were put in charge of the most fervent of the converts. These voluntary sacristans added to their labours the catechetical instruction of the young, who under their care became as well versed in faith as their elders. Of all the marvels of the Church of God the fervour and fortitude of the children of Japan presents perhaps the most glowing page. We find them smiling amid torments, from which the bravest shrank in horror. And they clamoured for martyrdom as most infants for their mothers' milk.

During the mission at Hirado a child came to Father Villela asking for baptism. It was promised him on condition he learned some catechism. He answered smiling: "But Father, I know it already." Which was proved true by examination, nor would the child leave the spot until he had been baptized. No sooner had the saving waters touched his brow than the boy seemed changed from an infant into an apostle. He preached the faith with such zeal in his own home that only a few days after he brought his whole family to be baptized. The labours of the ex-bonze Paul had been so strenuous that his strength broke down under it at Hirado. Feeling his end approaching, he retraced his steps to Bungo, that he might die in the arms of

his spiritual father and guide. Father Torres received him with tears of tenderness and compassion, and having given him the Last Sacraments, he had the joy of seeing him die in the most fervent sentiments of devotion, with the names of Jesus and Mary on his lips.

Soon after the death of Paul, the Christians of Hirado had their faith tested by persecution. No sooner had Father Villela and the other Father been driven from the city than the bonzes rushed to the churches, pulled down the altars, burnt the crosses, tore the pictures into a thousand pieces, and did all in their power to provoke the Christians to either revenge or apostacy. But their efforts were in vain ; not a single convert yielded, so well had they learned from the Fathers the lessons of constancy, peace and forgiveness. Thus Hirado had the honour of giving the first martyr to the Church of Japan.

On a little hill outside the city a cross had been erected where the Christians were wont to assemble for their devotions. Amongst these was a slave, who was threatened with death by her master if she frequented these assemblies. She answered meekly that she could not be less faithful to her heavenly master than she had been to her earthly one ; and went as usual next day to the place of assembly. Fiercely, with drawn sword her master waited her return. Unperturbed, and kneeling down humbly before him, she accepted her doom. Offering her head to the knife it was severed at a blow. She was buried with great solemnity, and immense was the gratitude of this little flock, that one of their number had witnessed to the faith with her blood. And they never wearied of exhorting one another to a similar fortitude.

At Hakato, Father Baltazar Gago's companions nearly suffered a like fate. They were driven from the city by the bonzes, and after much suffering arrived at Bungo. Here the good Christians went forth to meet them with wine and fruit, and brought them rejoicing to the city. As six years before at Yamaguchi, so now all the Fathers were united under persecution at Bungo. In this vineyard, for the present limited, they dispersed themselves through the villages converting thousands by their preaching, and showing forth in their lives the beauty of the doctrines of Christianity. What amazed these proud and disdainful Japanese was the love and tenderness with which Christianity gathered in and cherished whatever the pagans despised and loathed, lepers, foundlings, the sick poor, and the destitute. And greater still was their admiration when the Fathers, refusing the money that the Prince had given them, asked him to bestow it on three hospitals which they had founded in Funai.



Ere long the Japanese converts themselves experienced the sweetness that is to be found in ministering to the suffering members of Him Who took upon Himself our bruises and infirmities. Such an unheard-of marvel, effected by this new religion of love, failed not to fill with admiration the heathens who were witnesses of it. And once more in the Far East, as long ago in the West, was heard that word: "See how these Christians love one another!" For never since the days of the early Christians was there seen such a miracle of fraternal charity as existed among the Japanese converts. Truly they had but one heart and one soul, and the "Communion of Saints" was among them a living reality. In their persecution they wrote to console each other; and to exhort one another to perseverance in sanctity. They held up for models those who were faithful unto death and wiped away, in penance and sacrifice, the stain inflicted on their Church by apostates. We remember how St. Francis Xavier walked up and down the streets of Miako crying out: "Deos, Deos, Deos!" until the very children learnt the words and shouted them after him in derision. Well, the time had come when his tears and labours were to yield fruit a hundredfold.

Outside the capital lay the mountain of Hieizan, famous as a stronghold of the bonzes. Once no fewer than three thousand monasteries were grouped within its precincts. At this time the number was reduced to six hundred. At the head of one of these was an old man noted for his sanctity and learning, who was greatly struck by the fragments of the new doctrine which rumour had brought to his ears. He wrote therefore to Father Torres begging him to come to Frenoxama, as age and infirmity hindered his going to him. Father Torres was himself in a similar broken-down condition, but he sent in his stead a written exposition of Christian doctrine, and promised to send as soon as possible a Father who should complete his instruction. Father Villela was the Jesuit chosen for this mission. He dressed like a bonze, shaved his head and beard, and took ship for Miako. Neither starvation, ill-treatment by sailors, desertion on a desert isle, nor every possible misfortune could daunt the ardour of the true disciple of St. Francis Xavier. But when he arrived at Frenoxama the old bonze was dead. He had died, declaring his belief in Christianity. At the request of his successor, Father Villela preached to the other bonzes of the mountain. Then preparing himself for a tougher fight with Satan he and his companions spent ten days in prayer, fasting and mortification. Taking his stand in the market-place, and holding aloft the Cross, he called on all to come and hear the

Good Tidings. All the idle, the learned, and the envious, flocked to hear him and soon it was noised abroad that this European bonze, far surpassed those of their nation in learning, holiness and eloquence. This triumph raised the old calumnies against the Christians, and for three months the missionaries were shunned, refused food and lodging, and subjected to every kind of outrage. The imperturbable calm which the missionary had learned to preserve in the most difficult moments, at last won over his hearers. A man who was capable of such self-mastery must necessarily end by conquering the most malevolent. His very life seemed a greater miracle than the religion he preached. Some bonzes of eminent rank were the first to be convinced and to ask for baptism. The high nobles flocked to hear the meek man and we see people of the priestly and military and princely classes begging to be instructed and baptized.

In 1563 the movement had taken such proportions that the old pagan bonzes resolved to stifle this growing Christianity in the bud. Two of their number, learned and of noble rank and also magicians, were appointed by the Prince to examine into the thirty accusations of immorality brought against Christianity. The Christians gave up all for lost, and Father Villela withdrew a few leagues from the city. Whilst therefore one party was glorying in its expected triumph, and the other weeping over its anticipated defeat, a kind Providence led one of the umpires into the presence of an unlettered Christian called James. At first he preserved a rigid silence before this bonze-inquisitor. But fearing his silence might be misinterpreted, the Christian spoke forth boldly all that he believed.

The bonze listened with profound attention to doctrines so sublime, saying, if the poor disciple could speak with such inspiration, what might he not expect from the master. So behold ! the Jesuit who was driven from Miako was recalled by the very arch-persecutor himself. Father Villela could hardly believe this astonishing intelligence, and would have departed at once but that the Christians forbade him. He sent therefore in his place Brother Lawrence to ascertain the exact state of affairs. After three days he returned with the joyful news that the two bonze-umpires were only waiting the Father's arrival to be baptized, and owing to their influence at court their examples would probably be followed by many others.

These tidings were received by the Christians with tears of joy and thanksgiving. All glory to the power of God, Who could change the fiercest enemies of the Church into its most zealous defenders. Without delay Father Villela returned to Miako, where he baptized the bonzes. Through them was

published the edict of toleration of Christianity and they had already won over a great feudal lord, called in the Jesuit annals, Xicaidono, governor of a place called Iimori, not many leagues from Miako. This chief took Brother Lawrence to his citadel, and had the consolation of seeing baptized in a very short time seventy nobles of the first rank and five hundred of his subjects. Another of the remarkable conversions of this time was that of a great warrior and noble, called Takayama, noted for his strict probity, but greatly attached to the pagan gods.

Whilst arguing one day with Father Villela in the open square at Miako, he suddenly felt his heart and mind so changed that, bowing his head in submission, he acknowledged the true God and asked for baptism. He received it with all his family, and later we shall hear of his saintly and great son, under the name of Justo Ukondono. At Sakai, Father Villela was not without his consolation. The governor there having been baptized fitted up a room as a chapel, where twice a day the Fathers preached, converting many of the inhabitants and even a part of the garrison.

The world was agape with wonder at the changed behaviour of the Christian soldiers, so markedly in contrast with the licentiousness of their pagan comrades. And as for the governor's children, they gazed upon them as beings from another world. The boy, only fourteen, was angelic and had already begun to imitate the austerity of the saints. After his baptism when he received the name of Vincent, he seemed so full of grace that he appeared more like a seraph consumed with the love of God. Though so young the Jesuits speak of this child as being of consummate virtue. In order to efface any mark of his nobility, he shaved his head and mixed among the poor with astonishing humility. His food and clothing were of the coarsest, and he spoke with marvellous eloquence on the truths of Christianity so as to move the hearts of all who heard him, and who were assured that the Holy Spirit spoke through him.

His sister Monica was the first in Japan to consecrate her virginity to God. Throwing herself at the feet of the missionary she said: "You know, my Father, I am a Christian, and the infinite bounty of God whom I adore has given me another grace. He has inspired me with the desire of having no other spouse but Him. I owe this immense favour to the All-powerful Queen of Virgins, to whose service I vow the remainder of my days. And in order to make myself more worthy of imitating her retirement, her humility, her renunciation of the world, and her continual prayer, I am going to cut off my hair, and then to ask my father to rank me amongst his slaves and to employ

me in the most menial offices in the house." Frequent fasts and long and daily hours of prayer on the Passion of Our Lord helped on the holiness of this girl, who aspired from her childhood to sanctity.

It seemed the usage in this new Church of Japan to accustom the children to ask for martyrdom, and to speak in public on the principal doctrines of Christianity. And they discharged this duty with such grace and perfection, that it can be attributed to a supernatural source alone. In fact it was the care bestowed on the education of the young that gave the Church of Japan its wonderful stability. Every mission had its school from which the missionaries picked out those most apt in piety and learning. These children it was who were trained for public speaking and praying, all which they accomplished with an ease and virtue that might have done honour to old religious. As no Church was to drink more deeply of Our Saviour's Passion as Japan, so it was fitting that they above all should be distinguished in their devotion to Jesus Crucified. Every Friday the children dressed like penitents, and bearing each an instrument of the Passion, assembled in the Church and went processionally towards a representation of the Holy Sepulchre. They walked with a modesty and piety far beyond their years, and seemed penetrated with the grandeur of the mystery they represented. They would prostrate on the ground, and make aloud acts suitable to the instruments they bore. And they terminated this march to Calvary by begging with tears for the grace of martyrdom. And then, to testify to the sincerity of their desire to shed their blood for Jesus, they would uncover their innocent shoulders and take together a sharp discipline. And it was not the victims that wept, but the beholders. What wonder that God gave in such overflowing measure the aureola of martyrdom to the children of Japan! No other country can boast of such hosts of infant-martyrs who longed to die for Christ, and died in fullest consciousness of the pain borne and the love of Him for whom they bore it.

The missionaries themselves felt it was well worth suffering all they did for the conquest of hearts so simple, and souls so heroic as their dear Japanese neophytes. And the neophytes on their part, showed on all occasions a devoted attachment to their pastors. When a new missionary arrived they went in procession to meet him, singing psalms and hymns suitable to the occasion. As soon as he arrived, with cries of joy they ran to meet him and prostrated themselves at his feet. Then with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven they gave God thanks for sending them a new priest and pastor to conduct them on the way to heaven,



they accompanied him to the Church, where a *Te Deum* was sung. After which there was a holy contention among the faithful as to who should put up the missionary and defray the cost of his journey. And this was the custom observed for any Christian who arrived from another church. He was met and welcomed, harboured and set on his way, all for the love of God.

It is Brother Louis Almeida, who had visited all parts of Christian Japan, who furnishes facts innumerable of charity and hospitality among the Japanese neophytes. Never since the days of the early Christians was there seen such a marvel of charity among the brethren as existed among the Japanese. Truly they had but one heart and one soul. They wrote to console each other in their persecutions, they exhorted each other to perseverance and sanctity. They held up for shining models those who were faithful to death, and they wiped out in penance and sacrifice the stain inflicted on their Church by apostates. But to return to the harvests in Miako. These were so abundant and Father Villela was so worn out with toil, that at forty-two he was gray-haired and broken down, like a man of four score. But what mattered his sufferings? Had he not by them won Miako for his Lord? And now he, the representative of that Lord, could claim to sit in court with Japan's choicest nobility. Once a year the Kubo-Sama was wont to receive the homage of his feudal princes. Seated cross-legged like a pagan divinity, he gave no sign of recognition to any one except by a wave of the fan to him whom he wished to honour. Once was Father Villela thus honoured. He had gone to court in surplice and stole, but wearing these over a patchwork cloak, edged with gold fringe and made by himself. The novelty of this motley wear excited the fancy of the monarch, who sent a special messenger for the admired cloak, which underwent royal scrutiny, not only of the king but of the queen and her ladies. Shortly after this, in one of those revolutions so common in Japan, the Kubo and his family were massacred, and the Jesuits had to fly once more to Bungo.

There was at this time a chief of Owari, Nobunanga, who was brave, powerful, and ambitious, the best politician in Japan. In pity he befriended the one surviving member of the Kubo's family, sent an army to defeat the rebels, and finally placed him on the throne of Miako. On being thanked for the prowess which had effected this triumph, the old general Vatandono spoke in favour of Christianity. He craved no reward for his services except that the Jesuits should be recalled, for his brother Justo was a Christian, and he himself one in heart. Waving aside the objections of the bonzes whom



he hated, Nobunanga acceded to this request, and ordered that Father Torres should be restored to his forsaken church. His courtesy to this Father was marked and unfailing, and full facility was given for the preaching of the Gospel throughout his dominions. Once, leaving an assembly of his lords, he received apart Father Torres, and having settled his business, himself showed the Missioner all over the palace, with all its riches and splendours. He even made the Jesuit take tea with him, an honour never conceded in Japan to an inferior. Not only did he strip of dignity the defeated bonze who had sought Father Torres's life, but he resolved to extirpate the whole tribe of this detested priesthood. With his army he surrounded their stronghold of Hieizan, burnt their temple and monastery, and massacred to a man the bonzes, 3,000 in number, who had so long polluted this spot. Several other bonzeries in the various provinces were likewise demolished, and by these stringent measures the decline of the bonzes began with Nobunanga.

This ruler was at the highest pinnacle of his ambition in 1581. He was monarch of thirty-two kingdoms and virtually supreme ruler of Japan, for the heir of the late Kubo possessed the merest shadow of power. To celebrate his victories he gave a tournament to which all the princes of the land were invited. The splendour of this gathering was quite unparalleled. Nobunanga himself looked as if a shower of precious stones had fallen on him. Similarly were the nobles and other courtiers literally covered with pearls and diamonds, shining out of rare China silks. In the midst of all this intoxication of power and wealth the truths of Christianity, nevertheless, continued to make their strong appeal to this ruler. Once he seemed very nearly overcome by the arguments of the missioner, especially when he was convinced that these teachers taught only the sublime truths which they themselves believed. But reluctance to embrace the austere maxims of Christ extinguished the feeble flickerings of inspiration. And at last this great sovereign stooped to the idolatry of Nabouchodonosor, causing himself to be adored as a god in a temple built in his honour. This crime filled up the measure of his iniquity. A conspiracy was formed against him, and betrayed by his own courtiers he and his son perished miserably in the conflict. His brave general Vatandono, who had done so much for the Christian cause, was never himself baptized. He was under instruction when, in one of the sudden riots, he was killed.

## A SAINTLY HOUSEHOLD

**T**HIRTEEN years had passed since St. Francis Xavier had sojourned in the lonely castle of Ekandono. Though no missionary had visited this fortress during all these years, yet the faith which the Saint had first planted there was so living and its fervour so great that it resembled that of the early Christians. As a priest could not be spared, Father Torres sent to them a lay brother. Round him they crowded, asking news of their saintly Father and bursting into tears when they heard of his death. His every injunction had been scrupulously obeyed and they had remained fervent and innocent. The example and the words of these converts of Saint Francis Xavier was so powerful that during the two or three days that Brother Almeida remained among them, no fewer than seventy asked for baptism at his hands. The son of the governor who had been baptized by the Saint was now placed at the head, and with him was associated a young Japanese of rare piety and attainments. He it was, who, when the Brother asked him what he would do if the king asked him to abjure his religion, answered : " My Father, in such a case I would reply to my king thus : ' Do you wish O king that I should be faithful and true to your service, moderate, patient, obedient, mindful of your interests and forgetful of my own, full of charity to my neighbour, and of forbearance to all who injure or oppose me ? Command me then to be a Christian, for only from a Christian can such virtues be reasonably expected.' "

Among this model garrison the governor was the only one who remained a heathen, and he was one only in name. For he promised to embrace Christianity as soon as he could do so without exciting the displeasure of the king. The king of Omura at this time was Sumitada, whose father having abdicated was chosen by the nobles to fill his place. Sumitada was generous, noble-minded and renowned for courage. He had reigned for some years, honoured and beloved by all, when a Japanese book written by Father Villela in answer to the bonzes fell into his hands. Without a shadow of doubt the light of truth flashed into that ingenuous mind, and from that moment he was a Christian in heart. But prudence was a virtue as characteristic of this prince as his great firmness of purpose. He remembered the great opposition that the Christian preachers had everywhere encountered at the hands of the bonzes, and the persecutions raised wherever they had laboured. He would therefore go

cautiously to work. He began by representing to his council the commercial advantages that would accrue to the kingdom if traffic could be opened up with the Portuguese. Winning thus their sanction he wrote to Father Torres, offering his countryman the port of Yokoseura as a convenient port for unloading their goods. At the same time he privately invited him to send some religious to settle in that town. Spite of his age and infirmities, Father Torres betook himself in 1562 to Yokoseura. Under his auspices a church was speedily erected. No sooner was it known that a Father was in the town than the Christians from Hirado and the neighbouring towns flocked thither. For a year they had had none of the consolations of religion. And now so engrossed were they in their religious duties that they almost lived in the church, regardless of food or sleep, whilst Father Torres spent the night in hearing confessions.

Lent was spent in great austerity, and on Good Friday, clothed in sackcloth with heads crowned with thorns, they accompanied the Father to a neighbouring mountain to erect a cross there. The men scourged themselves, the women shed tears of sorrow as they went along. With Easter they put on the joy of the Church and dressed in richest apparel, and crowned with flowers they followed their Sacramental Lord. Such adoration and love shown to Him drew tears in abundance from the eyes of the old Father. Truly he was reaping the golden harvest that St. Francis Xavier had sown. Up to this time Sumitada had of set purpose avoided meeting the Fathers. At last he visited them and was pressed to dine with them as the Prince of Bungo was wont to do at Christmas. A magnificent feast had been prepared by the Portuguese merchants, who waited on the king as he sat at table. Afterwards he was shown the Church, where the beauty of a picture of Our Lady enchanted him. Then Father Torres presented him with a gilded fan on which was painted the Holy Name, with a cross above and three nails beneath ; which symbols he earnestly desired should be engraven on his majesty's heart. Then Sumitada took his leave, but in his anxiety to learn more, he was again at the Father's house immediately after supper. When he heard from one of them the story of the Cross of Constantine, a king and hero himself, he was fired with a love of the holy sign, and before the night had learned how to make it.

Next morning he sent a nobleman to tell Father Torres that he would become a Christian as soon as an heir was born to him ; for to do so before would create a disturbance and hinder religion. In the meantime he craved leave to have a cross

embroidered on his royal robes, to show that it was indeed engraven on his heart. We can only estimate to the full this request when we remember that the death of the cross was, in Japan, as in Rome of old, the punishment for the worst felons. Having got permission of Father Torres, Sumitada caused a splendid cross of gold to be made which he wore round his neck ; and when visiting his brother, the king of Arima, he spoke so eloquently of the New Religion, that *he* also resolved to become a Christian as soon as he had terminated a war in which he was engaged. Some months after this, Sumitada once more came to Yokoseura and had a private interview with Father Torres. He told him that, as he was expecting a son and heir, he could no longer defer his conversion, and that he had come with thirty lords to ask baptism at his hands. Like the aged Simeon, Father Torres cried out in his joy, " Now Lord dost Thou dismiss Thy servant, according to Thy word in peace." He told the king that never in his life could he have a happiness greater than this, and that his prayer was that His Majesty might indeed prove the Constantine of Japan. Most of the night was spent in the instruction of the neophyte and his train. Early next morning on arriving at the Church they found the Father and his assistants waiting to receive them. First they repeated the Credo on their knees, then rising prayed with arms extended as is the custom of the Japanese. Then Father Torres administered baptism to them all.

Bartholomew was the name taken by the first Christian king. Fearing that those thirty courtiers might be accused of time-serving, he assured his spiritual father that though he knew they loved him, yet would they never have done for his sake what they had done that day for the sake of God. And so filled was the king with the joy of the Holy Spirit that he would gladly have spent days and nights in conversing on spiritual things with Father Torres. But Holy Writ warns us that having entered the service of God we must be prepared for temptation. So, before the laving waters had dried on the king's brow, was he called forth to war.

It is a sacred custom in Japan that before starting on any military expedition an official act of homage and adoration is made to the God of War, who is usually represented wearing a helmet with the crest of a cock with outstretched wings. The troops therefore drew up before the war temple, presented arms and salaamed with great ceremony. Immense was their surprise when they saw the king enter the temple, order his officers to break down the lesser idols, whilst he himself, seizing the idol, hacked and hewed it with his sword until he had struck off its head. At the seat of war he bore proudly the white robe



of the neophyte, with the name of Jesus embroidered thereon, the cross and the three nails, his favourite device. In the intervals of rest he would instruct all who wished to be followers of Christ, from the highest officer to the lowest in the camp, sending them to the Jesuits to be baptized.

On the restoration of peace, regardless of the murmurs of the bonzes, he destroyed every temple and idol in his dominions. And this royal catechist was not content with only shedding abroad the light of Christ. He would show forth equally the charity of Christ, and stifling his former fastidiousness for the poor and wretched, he would daily feed great numbers of them and wait upon them. Christian humility was equally conspicuous in him, for he would never speak to Father Torres without laying down his sword, a mark of the deepest submission in Japan. And in Church, counting that all Christians are equal, he would accept of no seat of honour, but sat among the rest of the congregation. But not all this goodness and virtue could reconcile a portion of his subjects, who clung to their ancient paganism, and their indignation was great at the king's scorn for their abhorred heathen rites.

One day the king, instead of worshipping the statue of his predecessor, had it dragged from its costly shrine and cast into the fire. Another time he refused to join in the festival of the Japanese All Souls, and instead of throwing away food upon the dead, he fed thousands of the living poor in his dominions. On the eve of the feast of the dead the citizens leave the city to go to a place where the departed are supposed to assemble. Here they salute the spirits and invite them to enter the city and partake of some refreshment. Then the whole company wend their way home, each of the living conversing all the time with one of the dead. The procession is headed by torches and the city brilliantly illuminated to welcome the invisible guests. For them each house is lit up a magnificent table spread, for the Japanese hold that the spirits of the dead need material rest and refreshment. The next evening the spirits are conducted on their heavenward journey, and lest any lingerer cling to earth unwilling to go on, the rooms are beaten with sticks to hurry them away.

The concealed hatred for Christianity in the kingdom of Omura at last broke into open rebellion which, led by certain lords, sought to drive the Christian king Bartholomew from the throne. He was besieged in his own palace, but on his cutting his way out, the enemy beleaguered the fortress whereto he had fled. They offered to lay down their arms if he renounced the upstart religion. But he boldly challenged them to rob him



of his kingdom if they could, but never could they wrest from him Christ and His Cross. His faith and trust in God were rewarded by his father's troops coming to the rescue and raising the siege. Thus was the standard of the cross unfurled once more and waved again triumphant in Omura.

Bartholomew availed himself of this peace to settle the Jesuits in Nagasaki. For he foresaw a time when a seaport would be a desirable residence for the Fathers. This king's splendid example encouraged his brother, the king of Arima, to become a Christian. Like him he would have extirpated idolatry out of his kingdom. But whilst still in his first fervour and in his baptismal innocence, he was transferred to a higher kingdom. He died in sentiments of deepest gratitude for the gift of Christianity, clasping to his breast the crucifix which the bonzes strove to tear from his grasp. His son, a mere child, was compelled by his heathen tutors to persecute Christianity for a time and to worship idols. But through the interference of his uncle Bartholomew, he afterwards became a fervent Christian and munificent benefactor of the Church. He founded in 1580 a house for the Jesuits and a college for the nobility of his kingdom.

At this time Christianity was also introduced into the kingdom of Gotô, and the king himself was the first to ask for missionaries of Father Torres. For even heathen sovereigns saw and admired the improvement in morals worked on their subjects by Christianity. As no fathers could be spared, the Brothers Almeida and Lewis were sent to Gotô. They were received with gracious courtesy at the palace and two large halls prepared for their debates. The king himself and four hundred lords attended these, which the queen and the ladies heard, being separated only by a thin tapestry in one end of the hall. So delighted was the whole court at Brother Lewis' spirited tirade against the plurality of gods, that the king himself owned that he believed in one God, Creator and Lord of all things. But unfortunately he fell ill that very evening and the bonzes were only too delighted for some plea to disparage the new religion. The poor Brothers, on the other hand, begged God earnestly to deliver them from this dilemma. All the incantations and remedies of the bonzes failing, Brother Almeida boldly went to the palace and offered his services. He had some little knowledge of medicine and in a few days effected a complete recovery of the king. The queen and the young prince went to thank him, and the king allowed him to preach in his dominions. But the bonzes so worked on the superstition of the people that they refused to listen to the sermons. Therefore Brother Almeida was about to depart when the king, unwilling to lose him, issued a proclamation

commanding the attendance of his subjects at the conferences of the Christian bonze at which he and his son assisted. Conversions followed in great number, and the kingdom of Gotô was in a fair way of being quite Christian when a revolt broke out. Before the king took the field he wished his officers to swear fidelity after the idolatrous fashion of Japan.

The Commander-in-Chief being a Christian, and unwilling to offend either his conscience or his king, took the cup of wine which had been offered to idols and said aloud he was going to drink only to his majesty's health. Another officer bolder and more uncompromising stepped forward and forbade him to touch the idolatrous mixture. Then, turning to the king he said such an oath was unlawful for a Christian, but that if they allowed them to swear by the true God, they would fight for him to the last drop of their blood, and that neither fear nor interest should shake their allegiance to him. Then each Christian, armed with a picture of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, went into battle. The conflict was long and bloody, but the bravery of the Christians carried the victory, an act avowed even by the heathens. As the converts increased more and more they asked for a priest to reside among them. Father John Baptist Monti was sent. He baptized the king's son, Prince Lewis, and was followed in his mission by Father Alexander Valignani, who baptized the queen with seventeen of her ladies.

This was the signal for a renewed outburst of fury on the part of the bonzes. So the king, menaced by rebellion, urged his son either to renounce Christianity or to hold it in heart alone. To which Don Lewis nobly replied: "It grieves me, Sire, to be an object of danger or annoyance to you. But I should be deemed unworthy to be called your son, if through baseness or want of courage I dared not openly practise what I inwardly believe. I gladly give up my crown rather than betray my faith. And if that does not satisfy the rebels, they may take my life as well." Much as he admired his son's courage fear made the Prince base, and he sought to shake his constancy in another way. An edict was issued commanding all Christians to return to the worship of idols. No sooner was the order published than all the new converts flocked to the church as a protest against any denial of their faith. The Prince Don Lewis stationed himself in the porch, encouraging them by word and act to martyrdom. Father Valignani preached on the same subject, rousing their enthusiasm to such a pitch that with one voice the crowd shouted they would die like the early martyrs. Many children shared in this spiritual exaltation; and dressed in their best clothes, insisted on staying in the church that they might

share martyrdom with their parents. One little fellow clung to his mother crying : " Do not die without me for I also will go to heaven." Another small lad told the Father that he would place himself between him and the soldiers so that they might pierce him first. Such resistance sorely perplexed the king, and whilst hesitating as to the course of action he should take, Father Valignani stood before him. This good shepherd told the king that the only crime of his Christian subjects was that they adored One true God, and that if they were guilty, much more was he, their teacher. Therefore he implored that his life might be taken and those of so many of his faithful subjects spared. The king was touched and silent, and his council were so struck with the magnanimity of the white bonze, that they pondered and caused the late edict against the Christians to be rescinded. Shortly after Don Lewis succeeded to the throne, and during his reign Gotô enjoyed peace.

## CHAPTER V.

## FATHER TORRES' APOSTOLATE

**T**WENTY years had passed since St. Francis Xavier left the land of his heart's desires. During all this time it was his companion, Father Torres, who had been the nursing-father of the Church of Japan. And now this child of tears was rising into robust adolescence. The kingdom of Omura had almost declared its Christianity under its saintly king Bartholomew. The kingdoms of Arima and Gotô only awaited a favourable opportunity to do the same. In Miako the Christian religion was tolerated under the protection of the powerful Nobunanga; whilst in Bungo it was cherished and supported. How in so short a space had Father Torres done so much? How had he with his own hands accomplished the baptism of thirty thousand Japanese? It was his life of prayer and sacrifice that gave to his apostolate this amazing fecundity. It was his inner union with Christ that raised fifty churches and founded so many colleges and seminaries. To his active labours of a missionary he had added the austere virtues of an anchorite. During these twenty years no other food but roots and herbs and boiled rice had passed his lips, and all his many journeys, even in the depth of winter, had been made barefoot. What wonder that he was utterly worn out and spent and that year after year he had written to Rome to ask for a successor in the mission. It seemed as if his remnant of strength lasted out only until the long-looked-for help came. With the arrival of Father Cabral in 1570 the tension was released, and a few weeks after the totally spent missionary fell ill and consummated the sacrifice of a long and devoted life. He died October 2nd, 1570, and his greatest eulogium is that he was a co-labourer with St. Francis Xavier. Among all the Jesuits at Goa who had volunteered for the Japanese mission, the Saint singled out Father Torres alone as most worthy to share in his apostolic work. His other zealous coadjutor, Brother John Fernandez, had died four years previously and might equally rank among the first apostles of Japan.

Father Villela had also passed away, consumed more by labour than by years. When Father Cabral began his visitation he was hailed with delight by the Christians in the several newly-planted churches. From Nobunanga, then in the height of his power, he received the greatest kindness and courtesy. But what touched him most was the fervour of Yamaguchi. Nearly



all the Christians there had been the neophytes of St. Francis Xavier. And though they had not seen a priest for twenty years, their faith and their charity were still in pristine perfection. Without a church they had nevertheless assembled each Sunday in the house of one of the faithful. Here prayer and pious reading was carried out and a collection made for the poor. A blind old fiddler and a poor pedlar were responsible for this group of perfect Christians. The one whilst fiddling from door to door warmed the hearts of the faithful and enkindled the souls of the pagans. Whilst the comb-seller pressed his customers to buy, not so much his wares as the Pearl of Great Price. And thus he converted a great nobleman.

At Omura the holy king Bartholomew had gone out to meet Father Cabral and conducted him in triumph to his capital. His fervent Christianity had brought about another insurrection instigated by the bonzes. "Now we shall conquer for they make war on God," he had said, on hearing they had set fire to a church. And not only did he conquer, but he proved to be the Constantine of Japan as had been predicted by Father Torres. Assembling his great Council, Bartholomew had told them that it was his wish that all the idols in his kingdom should be destroyed, and that henceforth Christianity was to be the religion of the State. A magnificent church was built to commemorate this event and Father Cabral baptized the queen and the remaining members of the royal family. In the midst of this joy the missionary was recalled to Bungo to partake of a joy still greater. The king of that country had loved and venerated beyond words St. Francis Xavier, but after twenty years he was still a pagan. Nevertheless, through every storm of opposition, he had always protected and defended the Fathers, and when unable to do so had sent them messages of kindness and sympathy.

According to the custom of the country, his second son was destined to become a bonze, and he had built for him a magnificent monastery and set aside vast revenues for its maintenance. But this boy was already a Christian in heart and he resolutely told his father that he would rather die than enter the ranks of an idolatrous and depraved bonzehood. The king loved this son passionately, and felt convinced that Christianity would more efficaciously ensure the boy's submission to his brother than a lying priesthood. But if he yielded how could he face his furious queen whose hatred of everything Christian had won her the name of Jezabel? How would he satisfy his people who would demand the enforcement of the law?

In his perplexity Father Cabral was summoned from Omura and to him the young prince was entrusted for instruction.



Not long after he was baptized, the king himself being present and remaining uncovered and on his knees during the whole of the ceremony. The event was celebrated the same evening by a splendid banquet. The queen was implacable. She sent her son word that he was no longer to consider himself her child, nor appear again in her presence. Sebastian, the royal neophyte, answered that he was truly sorry, but that as henceforth the Mother of God should supply her place he should certainly be no loser by the change.

A deep impression was produced by this conversion, and many others followed from among the native nobility and the royal princes of the adjoining kingdoms. Most of the former were of Sebastian's own age, and the spectacle of their goodness and changed lives touched the whole city. The Fathers formed fifty of them into a Sodality of Our Lady. They met on Sundays and holidays for prayer and then practised debates on the principal doctrines of the Christian religion. Thus they could parry the blow and fence with the bonzes on their own ground and they never did so without inflicting defeat. The queen's rage was further heightened by the conversion of a favourite and adopted nephew, who was to marry her daughter. The choice was put to him of remaining a Christian and returning to his original obscurity or of enjoying as a pagan highest court distinction. The boy nobly replied; fear of this choice had long kept him from declaring his intentions, but if now he must needs choose, then he was willing to relinquish the love of a father, the honour of a royal marriage and to return to his lowly lot rather than offend God. But the queen was proof against all tenderness and the boy was sent to prison. After a time he was recalled to court, and attempts to shake his resolution were made by means of every sort of flattery and indulgence. One day in the midst of these criminal allurements, he rushed to Father Cabral and implored him to baptize him. He did so, giving him the name of Simon. In the excess of his joy the new convert appeared in court wearing a rosary round his neck.

This roused the queen to a fresh outburst of frenzy and Simon was once more sent to prison whilst his father, the queen's brother, going to Father Cabral, promised all sorts of favours if only the boy would conceal his religion. But refusal would mean destruction and death to the Fathers. To which the Jesuit answered destruction and death was preferable to such treachery. He had not relinquished the riches and pleasures of Europe to choose those of Japan. If they were in a mind to give them their only treasure, heaven, troops were not needed to effect this, for they would always be found at home ready and

willing to die. So it proved. Father Cabral assembled all his brethren in the church, there solemnly to offer to God the sacrifice of their lives ; whilst almost immediately after Simon's father called out his troops with a special command to kill the Fathers.

When this was rumoured through the city, the church was speedily surrounded by a body of Christian cavaliers, who came armed to the teeth to die with their spiritual Fathers. To every remonstrance those high-spirited soldiers only answered, that they had come to share the crown of martyrdom with the Fathers, and that the queen's brother, having no authority, they would not allow him to insult God and His Church. At their head stood the king's own son, Sebastian. This same enthusiasm had spread far and wide through the city. At an early hour of the night the watchers in the church were disturbed by a loud knocking at the gates. The cavaliers sought their arms and the Fathers prostrated before the altar. The disturbers were found to be only a number of ladies of the highest rank who had come as Christians to die with their fathers and brothers. In any country such courage in women would have excited admiration. But in Japanese women, tramelled by exclusion and convention, such heroism filled the heathen with so much wonder, that many were converted.

In the meantime, the prime mover in this affair, frightened to put his menace into execution, sent calumnious messages about the Fathers to the king. But the king, refusing to believe any evil report against the Jesuits, returned home to settle the matter in person. The queen Jezabel was divorced and sent away from court. Simon was released from prison and married to the king's daughter, and by royal order Father Cabral daily attended the palace, there to instruct the new queen and her daughter. The king himself assisted at the instructions. It was soon observed that he began to fast every Friday and Saturday ; that he daily said the rosary, and that certain little favourite idols were destroyed.

One day he called a Jesuit Brother to his chamber and declared that it was not through want of willingness or devotion that he had not become a Christian. He had thought it was his duty first to search among all the sects of his native land to see if aught like the truth was to be found among them. But that the more he penetrated into their tenets, the less he found to content the conscience, or to satisfy the soul. In the Catholic Church alone could the mind and spirit find rest, and therefore he was about to enter it. But to prevent any disturbance in his kingdom, he was going to abdicate in favour of his eldest son. In the fervour of his resolution, he bade Father Cabral to come at

once to his palace. There, standing humbly in the midst of his court, he demanded baptism, and asked for the name of Francis. For he felt sure he owed his grace to that beloved Father Francis Xavier whom he had known and loved when young.

On 28th August, 1578, at the age of fifty, was the king of Bungo baptized as Francis. As he left the church, he who for twenty-seven years had vacillated between truth and error, in the sight of all his idolatrous subjects, shed tears of grief. Leaving the kingdom to his son he retired to the adjoining province of Hiuga, where he intended to build a town to be inhabited solely by Christians, and governed by Christian laws. It was on the feast day of his holy patron and Father, St. Francis, that this abdication took place. But the gaily decked fleet with Christian banners that conducted him to his new home had more the aspect of triumph than abdication. This joyful intelligence was the first news that greeted Father Valignani when once more he landed at Kuchinotzu as Visitor-General. But it was soon to be clouded by tidings of war.

The king of Satsuma joining hands with the infidels of Bungo attacked the province of Hiuga which King Francis had to leave. Of course the bonzes attributed these disasters to the indignation of the gods. But Francis said: "Happen what may I have become a Christian never to change. God knows the manner of life which I had traced out for myself at Hiuga. But since he has willed it otherwise, it is for Him to command and for me to obey." Night and morning he meditated on the Passion, said the rosary daily with his family, confessed and communicated weekly, and his fasts and austerities became so frequent and severe that the Fathers had to remonstrate with him on the subject.

For thirty years had Francis ruled his kingdom with fortune unparalleled in Japanese history. In a few days he saw it shivered to pieces by the king of Satsuma. But it was not this so much which cut him to the quick as the apostasy of his son. He had shamefully and weakly yielded to his infidel lords, who had refused to march against the Satsumans unless the king swore to restore the ancient worship. His broken-hearted father Francis took a solemn oath in the privacy of his chamber that though the Jesuit who had baptized him should renounce Christianity, and though all the Christians of Europe should cast it from their hearts, and that though—which he believed to be impossible—the Pope should prove a traitor to his trust and deny it—yet would he himself, standing alone in the midst of the ruins of Christendom, continue to confess and acknowledge and adore Him, the One true God, and Creator of the Universe, even

as at that very moment he confessed, acknowledged and adored Him, without doubt or hesitation as to a single article of the Creed, which had been proposed for his acceptance. The young prince, ashamed of his defeat and apostacy, sought the help of his father. King Francis unwillingly left his retreat, but having done so he brought all his old energy and decision to bear upon the undertaking. Very soon he had driven the Satsumans beyond the frontier, banished the lords who had leagued with them, and restored peace to his kingdom.

It was exactly at the moment of this happy reconciliation of the prince, that Father Valignani returned from his visitation as Visitor-General. He had seen everywhere such abundant evidence of the rapid progress of Christianity that he proposed going to the Pope and representing to him the spiritual necessities of the mission entrusted to him. No sooner was his intention made public than the two kings of Bungo, with those of Arima and Omura, resolved to add a solemn embassy of their own for the purpose of laying at the feet of His Holiness the homage and obedience of the Christian kings of Japan.



## CHAPTER VI.

## FIRST JAPANESE EMBASSY TO ROME

**T**HIRTY years had passed since St. Francis Xavier with his one Japanese convert had landed at Kagoshima. In his general visitation Father Valignani had found how rapidly Christianity had spread in this short time. The Christians numbered one hundred and fifty thousand; the Jesuits, though one hundred, were hardly sufficient for the spiritual needs of a widely separated and scattered population. And Father Valignani saw that however large and continuous the supply of foreign missionaries might be, it could not take, in power and importance, the place of a native clergy. The firm establishment of seminaries and colleges was the first essential to the realization of his plan, the second was the need of a resident bishop. For all these benefits Rome must be consulted. There was another reason for the urgency of the embassy. The Jesuits wished the Pope and their brethren in Europe to realise how important an addition to the Church was Japan. Sight better than hearsay could do this. Also seeing that the Japanese reckoned themselves the wisest nation in the world, the Jesuits by showing them the wisdom and greatness of other races, wished to inculcate in their representatives a fitting respect for those countries whence their new religion was derived.

For all these reasons, then, Father Valignani undertook the onerous charge of the embassy. It was to consist of two young princes, Mancio Ito, nephew and representative of King Francis of Bungo, and Michael who went in the name and under the authority of the kingdoms of Arima and Omura. To these were added two other noblemen, Julian and Martin, none of the four ambassadors being more than sixteen years of age. Nevertheless, their wisdom and prudence might have befitted grey-haired statesmen. All those boys had lost their fathers, and the lamentations of their mothers at so long and perilous a journey were loud and long. To elude the pirates who infested these lonely seas they travelled almost incognito to Nagasaki, whence they sailed on the 25th February, 1582. The retinue consisted of Father Valignani, another Jesuit, a brother and a few pages.

This loyal embassy to Rome, was so hateful to the devil who holds Japan in thrall that for seven days and nights he lashed up the waters and kept the travellers in hourly peril of shipwreck and death. Many other dangers tried the faith of these young Japanese in vain. At last they arrived at Goa, where the



Viceroy of the Indies received them with every conceivable kindness and courtesy. Whilst the Archbishop lavished on them the most paternal attentions, the people of the city fêted them with public rejoicing. But what especially pleased the youthful ambassadors was the deputation of scholars sent by the Jesuits to greet them on their arrival.

As Father Valignani had been appointed Provincial of the Indies, Father Rodriguez took his place in the Embassy, and soon won the affection of the young ambassadors. The Viceroy selected the best and strongest vessel he had to convey them to Portugal, and besides presenting each with a magnificent gold chain and reliquary, he placed three thousand crowns at their disposal for the expenses of the journey. Just two years after their departure from Nagasaki they sailed up the Tagus. Lisbon was prepared to receive them in the most sumptuous manner had not Father Valignani forbidden any public demonstration. On the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, they went to the ceremonies in the episcopal Church. As the vast congregation saw the devotion with which the young ambassadors bowed down profoundly before the altar, they burst into tears of joy at one more nation acknowledging the One true God.

At Madrid, Philip II received them in the midst of his family, embraced them and bid his children do the same. In the royal chapel they were placed just before the altar, that the court might have a good view of their persons. The rest of their journey was made at Philip's expense, and his munificence fitted out his best vessels to take them to Rome. From beginning to end their passage through Italy was one long triumphal progress, until they were wearied with state honours. Most eager of any was Gregory XIII for the arrival of his newly-won children. When they were two days from Rome he sent the General of the Papal Forces with several troops of cavalry to escort them into the city. From motives of devotion they wished their entrance into the Eternal City to be made by night, without any attendance and as privately as possible. But the precaution availed little. All Rome was eagerly awaiting their arrival; multitudes met them even at the gates and conducted them in triumph to the professed house of the Jesuits, where the General, Father Claudius Aquaviva, at the head of two hundred Jesuits was ready to receive them. They were led directly to the Church where the *Te Deum* was intoned, whilst the envoys remained prostrate before the altar. Even Julian, who was ill, could not be induced to retire, so anxious was he to join the others in thanking God for the happy and almost unlooked-for success of their enterprise.

The Jesuits would have preferred introducing them to the Pope in private. But seeing that they came as accredited ambassadors from the kings of Japan, Gregory chose to give them a public reception with all the honours usually given to crowned heads. The day after their arrival was fixed for the ceremony and Julian insisted on joining the procession. He had not proceeded far when he found himself too weak to sit on horseback and would have had to return had not a nobleman taken him into his carriage and driven him to the Vatican. The Pope received him with most fatherly kindness, giving him his blessing over and over again. Promising him that another consistory would be called when he was well enough, he prevailed on him to retire. The rest of the Embassy met at the vineyard of Julius II, where all the greetings of ceremony were begun by the Bishop of Tivoli. A procession was then formed, the light troops and Swiss Guards leading the way, followed by the carriages of the Spanish and French Ambassadors and by all the Roman princes and nobles on horseback. Among these last rode the Japanese youths, immediately preceded by the officers of the Pope's household. Mounted on magnificent chargers and dressed in their national costume they attracted every eye. They wore, one over another, three long robes of dazzling whiteness exquisitely embroidered in rare colours with birds, flowers and foliage. A scarf of the same material was crossed over the breast and knotted behind. Their swords and sabres of the finest tempered steel were richly encrusted, both sheath and handle, with precious stones, pearls and enamels. But more striking than their gorgeous attire was the innocence on each youthful brow, the noble modesty in every look and attitude, the gravity and dignity of their mien and bearing. This it was above all that won the involuntary admiration of all beholders.

Mancio Ito as Chief of the Embassy rode first. When he reached the bridge of St. Angelo there was a salute of guns which was answered by others from the Vatican. As the cortège rode up to the gates of the Vatican, music greeted their arrival. In the Sala Regia surrounded by his cardinals the Pope was waiting to receive them. Holding their credentials in their hands, the young Ambassadors prostrated before the Vicar of Christ, and to him as Universal Head of the Church tendered their homage and obedience. They spoke in Japanese which was interpreted by Father Masquita. All present were greatly moved by the youthfulness, the faith, the loyalty of these Eastern princes; the Pope burst into tears. Like a father he embraced and lifted them up as they kissed his feet, which

tenderness touched them more than any honours they had yet received. After this they were conducted to a platform, where they stood with uncovered head whilst the letters of the several monarchs were read and a gracious acceptance of them by the Pope. Once more they were taken to the foot of the throne, where they were saluted and embraced by the cardinals and answered with marvellous wisdom the many questions put to them concerning their country. That day they dined with the Pope who afterwards in a long and private audience interrogated them minutely concerning the growth of Christianity in Japan. He shed many tears of joy at its rapid progress and promised a revenue of four thousand crowns for Father Valignani's seminary at Funai.

This was the last official act of Gregory XIII ; a few days after he was called to his reward. But to the last, his thoughts were on his dear Japanese and an hour before his death he sent to enquire after Julian's health. The young Embassy mourned for their newly-found protector as they would have mourned for a father. For in a short time they had learned to love him greatly. From his successor, Sixtus V., they received likewise every mark of kindness and honour. At his coronation they were ranked with the other ambassadors, and he promised them not only a future bishop for Japan, but added two thousand crowns more to the grant for a seminary, whilst a sum of three thousand was added for the expenses of their homeward journey.

On Ascension Thursday, in the presence of all the Roman nobility, the Pope conferred on them the Knighthood of the Golden Spur. The ambassadors of France and Spain buckled on the spurs, whilst His Holiness presented the sword and girdle, and put around their necks the golden chain, embracing them at the same time. The new knights swore fealty unto death and in later years that vow was sealed with their blood. The return journey was made with the same state. At Venice fifty Senators clad in their scarlet robes of office were waiting to receive them and conducted them to a barge hung with crimson velvet, to take them to the city. The annual procession which was put off till their arrival, was held with more than usual magnificence. Among the historical representations exhibited on this occasion they were wonderfully surprised and delighted to find depicted by Titian as an historical scene their presentation to the Pope.

Amidst all the honour and adulation showered by Christian Europe on these youngest children of the Church, the princely Orientals remained unshaken and undazzled. Not a whit were they moved from their pristine humility, piety and gravity. Nor was any amount of lionizing allowed to interfere with their

daily devotions and reception of the Sacraments. Embarking from Lisbon they were joined at Goa by Father Valignani, who wished himself to restore them to their mothers and their country. In the eight years of their absence many changes had passed over Japan, which menaced greatly the interests of Christianity.

Nobunanga the Great was dead. He who had so leaned to and befriended the Church, became at last so intoxicated by his own greatness as to cause himself to be proclaimed Lord of Nature, Creator of the Universe. A magnificent temple was built in his honour and the adoration of the people ordered to be paid to him. Thousands flocked to witness this piece of blasphemy, which was to be initiated by the king's son. But not a single Christian attended. This crime seems to have been the culmination of Nobunanga's iniquitous ambition. He and his son perished shortly after in a conspiracy formed against him in which his palace was burnt to the ground. His general, Hideyoshi, who avenged this crime on his master, assumed nevertheless the government himself and took a title even more exalted than that of Kubo, being called Sovereign Lord or Kampakudono. By courage and cunning he at last acquired a power and authority which surpassed the utmost that Nobunanga had ever possessed.

Sad to relate, the defection of Christians had aided in this dangerous augmentation of power for one monarch. The young king of Bungo, the degenerate son of the saintly Francis, who had abdicated, had again proved false to his promises. Instead of becoming a Christian he had led a most dissolute life and ended by persecuting the Christians and by killing his own brother Sebastian. This sin seemed to call down the chastisement of heaven, for pestilence desolated his kingdom and war deprived him of his territory. But it was restored to him by Kampakudono, who sent an army under a Christian general named Simon Koderu to re-instate him. Stung by the reproaches of Simon the king made up his mind to become a Christian and was baptized under the name of Constantine. But this second apostacy had broken his father's heart. For after a slight illness he succumbed. His last days were like those of a saint. He forbade any converse, save on Jesus and Mary and with those names on his lips he died. His death had been preceded by that of Bartholomew, the first Christian king of Japan. With those two sovereigns the bright summer sun of Japanese Christianity had set. Blood red autumn would follow after and then the wintry silence of death.

The great power and authority by which Kampakudono had restored Constantine to his throne, seems to have awed all the petty kings of Japan. For from henceforth they paid him an unconditional submission. Such absolute power centred in one



man may have been good for government, but it was to prove fatal to the interests of Christianity, as by one edict Christians in every kingdom of Japan could be attacked. At first Kampakudono was far from being unfavourable to the new religion. His chief officers were Christians, and nowhere was there a finer general of any army than Simon Koderu, or a grander admiral of the fleet than Augustine? And where was there more loyalty and power than in Justo Ukondono, governor of Tagatsuki? Many of the ladies of the court were also Christians and he singularly respected their virtues. To the Provincial of the Jesuits he gave the land on which to build a church and college. He would have become a Christian himself, said the mighty monarch, if the new religion were but a little more indulgent to human nature.

One can judge, then, what the consternation of the Provincial was, when a very short time after this royal munificence the edict for the banishment of the Jesuits was proclaimed. It is useless to try to conjecture the reasons of Hideyoshi's changed policy. Certain it was that whilst a prey to intoxication he was influenced by the villanious calumnies of the bonze Jakuin. This royal pander had received a scornful rebuff from some Christian ladies of Arima, whom he was trying to secure for the royal seraglio. And for this courageous act the whole body of Christians was accused of being in a state of contumacious revolt, and the decree for persecution was issued that very evening.

A whole list of crimes was imputed to the Jesuits with the order to leave the country in twenty days. Vain it was for the Provincial to refute all these charges and to plead their innocence and loyalty to Japan. The next to feel the royal displeasure was Justo Ukondono, who had once helped Hideyoshi to attain his great power. When told to renounce his religion or leave the kingdom, Justo replied: "Tell the Kampakudono that Justo is ready to lay down his office and his life, but he dare not forget his allegiance to God." And this was the sentiment of his whole household. His old father on hearing of his son's exile and beggary lifted up his hands to heaven and thanked God for having chosen him and his to be the first examples of fidelity in His service. He desired one favour more and that was that they might both have the happiness of shedding their blood in His Cause.

Whilst the Christian officers of the governor wept over their master's fate, they begged the honour of sharing it with him. But Justo refused, urging them to remain in the royal service and proclaim their loyalty to the whole world. Even the heathens lamented Justo's misfortune and offered to shelter him, but he



refused to implicate them in his ruin. So he and his family wandered for many months homeless and penniless, as those royal wanderers described in the Epistles to the Hebrews. The Admiral of the fleet, Augustine, gave him a refuge in his states and later the emperor relented and sent him into honourable exile in the kingdom of Tango.

One of the consolations of Justo's exile was the conversion of the queen of this island. Her husband had often told her of the sublime doctrines of Christianity, which he had heard from Justo, and beautiful and highly endowed as she was her soul was set aflame by the sweet teaching of Christ. When her husband had gone to the war she betook herself in disguise to the church and begged Father Cepeda to give her baptism. Seeing she was a lady of high rank he deferred until satisfied as to her identity and dispositions. The next day she sent one of her ladies-in-waiting for a solution of some of her doubts. And each day further instruction was brought her by some of her waiting women, until they were each and all convinced and converted. Impatient for the same grace herself, the queen implored the father to baptise her. But the edict was in force, and the cautious Jesuit fearing the risk, deputed one of her ladies to baptise her in his stead in the palace. This lady Marie Kyohara was rich and beautiful and destined in marriage to one of the greatest nobles in Japan. But such a holy enthusiasm filled her soul as she poured the life-giving waters on the queen's head, that there and then she made a vow of chastity, cut off her hair and renounced for ever all earthly joys.

The queen, who was called Grace in baptism, lived with all her ladies like cloistered religious. Yet all her sweetness and virtue could not move her husband, a man of violent and brutal temper. Though he loved her dearly, during thirteen years she suffered a daily martyrdom at his hands. But her sole response was he might take her life but not her faith. God accepted her offering, and Queen Grace was the first to set the seal of martyrdom on her fidelity.

Whilst waiting for a boat the banished Jesuits, sixty-six in number, assembled at Hirado. The churches were closed, the altars dismantled, and once more in the privacy of the Upper Chamber was the Holy Sacrifice offered. But as this large number could not keep together and maintain themselves for six months, the various Christian chiefs strove for the honour of sheltering in their dominions the exiled fathers. One Chief alone, Constantine of Bungo, refused. Once more he had apostatized and on his own account persecuted the Christians and appeared at court wearing a little idol round his neck.

But his cowardice only won the contempt of the emperor, whilst the staunch Christian chiefs were received later with favour and courtesy.

It was just at this conjuncture, in the year 1590, that the ambassadors from Rome landed with Father Valignani at Nagasaki. Waiting to receive them were the kings of Arima and Omura, with whom was the apostate Constantine. Bitterly did his cousin the ambassador Mancio Ito reproach the coward ruler. And so efficacious were his rebukes that Constantine not only repented sincerely of his apostacy, but remained to the end a steadfast Christian. It was as delegate of the Viceroy of the Indies that Father Valignani obtained an audience with the emperor. And most graciously were he and the ambassadors received by him. Horses and litters had been sent to facilitate their entrance into Miako, where they charmed the monarch by the presents of the Viceroy and the interesting accounts of their travels. He even offered to take Mancio Ito into his service. But this prince had already chosen his master and been accepted for higher service.

When in Rome, the General of the Society had received him into the Order, and no sooner were the letters and presents of the Pope delivered to the respective chiefs of Arima and Omura, than two more of these royal youths entered the novitiate. All Europe had applauded them as they rode in shining array. Henceforth as humble missionaries they would traverse their country from end to end, and who shall say there was no cortège nor plaudits to accompany them on their way?

## CHAPTER VII.

## A JAPANESE THEBAN LEGION

**H**IDEYOSHI had no sooner usurped the throne of his master Nobunanga, than he was consumed by a similar ambition. Like him he had wrested from every feudal chief homage and submission, and coveted next divine adoration from his subjects. To attain to this, two things were necessary: foreign conquest and the total annihilation of the Christians who would never consent to this royal idolatry. War therefore was declared against Corea; Augustine was appointed Commander-in-Chief, Simon Koderu placed next in command; whilst the lords of Arima, Omura and Bungo were given places of distinction and danger. The leaders therefore being Christian, the bulk of the army was likewise Christian. Thus the wily monarch hoped that if the expedition failed, the Christians would be cut to pieces, but if it succeeded he would expatriate them by assigning them posts of honour in the newly-acquired territory. It was at this time he took the higher title of Taiko-Sama, resigning his discarded title to his nephew and heir. Later he was seized with jealousy of this boy, who, together with all his family, friends and followers, were put to death.

Meanwhile the Christian warriors in Corea were uniting their loyalty to their God and to their sovereign. They had invited some of the Jesuits to join the expedition, not only for the further instruction of the soldiers, but also for the conversion of the Coreans. Thus the camp became a field of prayer. What wonder that eschewing the ordinary military dissipations they fought battles, won forts and reported fresh victories in every despatch. Taiko-Sama, delighted at these successes, recalled to court Justo Ukondono. "I have not seen you for a long time, Justo," said Taiko-Sama to the disgraced chieftain, "but now I have work for you to do." Thus was this just man restored to power with the same caprice and suddenness as he was deprived of it. Under these startling alternations of fortune in Japan, what wonder that the Japanese have been well schooled in stoicism.

At this time, Constantine for some small defection in the Corean war, was stripped of his dominions, and condemned to exile at the court of his greatest enemy the king of Satsuma. Not much earthly reward did he get for his frequent apostasies. Nevertheless he atoned for them at last by living as a model of every Christian virtue and by dying in sentiments of contrition and devotion. In spite of the loyalty of the Christians in the Corean war, the penal laws were still in force. Most probably

they would have fallen into abeyance, but for the vain boast of a foolish Spanish captain whose folly has injured the Christian cause in Japan up to this very day. Boasting to a Japanese the wide-spread conquests of Spain, he was asked how she acquired all this territory. Commercial jealousy of the Portuguese, to whom the ports of Japan were open, prompted his answer. He said that the missionaries were the pioneers of conquest, as they first converted a people and then won them over to the kingdom they served. There was positive falsehood in this statement, for it was the missionaries that followed the trader or conqueror and they mostly sympathized with, and supported, the conquered rather than the conqueror. Anyhow these imprudent words sowed in the mind of Taiko-Sama a suspicion which was to be deepened by another unhappy event.

In 1579, the Jesuit Valignani, visiting the Church of Japan in the name of his Superior General, saw the necessity of getting more apostolic labourers if the Church of the country was to attain its natural development. Besides, the good dispositions of the people led him to believe that the work of evangelization was ripe. In a meeting held with the principal members of the Order in Japan, he spoke with animation of his desire to invite the other Religious Orders to come to Japan and share the work which the Jesuits alone were not able to perform. Would to God that this policy had been carried out ! It might have produced untold good, and the unity among the workers might perhaps have saved that Church from persecution.

Father Valignani stated reasons why other Orders ought to be called to Japan : (1) Buddhism, he said, was everywhere on the decline ; it was losing its hold on the people who saw its falsity, and the sooner the tenets of Christian doctrine were shown, the faster would Buddhism disappear. The emptiness of that religion moreover was emphasised by the immoral conduct of the bonzes. (2) Demands for workers came from all parts, and the Society of Jesus was unable to furnish them in proportion to the demand. The Religious Orders were then sending many missionaries to the Philippine Islands and the Indies, and would gladly share in the work of converting a people so interesting as the Japanese. Nay, is it not natural to believe that they would give their preference to the Japanese, over barbarous and semi-barbarous nations, on whom they have to impress the dignity of manhood before attempting any serious work of Christianisation. (3) The system of Christianizing and administrating the Japanese people by one religious order alone, whose members were taken from one country only, may have some advantages as long as State and Church work



in harmony. But should the State break this union and banish the religious, the Church of Japan would be left in great stress by not being able to get the needed labourers. (4) Then may not also a thought of excessive patriotism and susceptibility arise in the minds of the Japanese? Seeing only one Order and that of one country only, they might suspect that the priests connected with that State were sent to prepare the conquest of their country. (This suspicion was unhappily justified). Then again competition in trade may bring human passions into play to such an extent that any means might be considered as honest by a nation which another nation was trying to cut out from its share in trading. This supposition likewise was verified later on, by the Dutch and the English, not to speak of the Spaniards, who were first to attack the reputation of the Portuguese.

Yet reasons that had their weight were presented on the other side. Unity and uniformity in the administration can be obtained nowhere to perfection except one congregation alone has the charge of the whole land; nay, this congregation will have to select its members from one country alone, Portugal for instance. It will thus avoid all friction that the question usually fosters even among the holiest men.

The Fathers being divided in their opinion the case was brought before the Superior General of the Society. Mistrusting his own judgment in an affair of such consequence, the General placed the matter before the Holy Father, then Gregory XIII. The Pope to show deference to the king of Spain, who at that time was bearing all the expense for sending missionaries to the East, asked his advice before settling the matter. The outcome was the Bull *Ex pastorali officio*. This Bull forbade under pain of major excommunication, any but the Jesuits to teach Christianity in Japan, unless a special permission of the Pope had been obtained. It is not for us to judge either the over prudence or over exclusiveness of a Papal Bull, nor to condemn the Jesuits for their close adherence to it, nor the Franciscan for what looks like a seeming infringement of it. But the question arises how did the Friars, in spite of the Bull, manage to come into Japan?

Hideyoshi had sent a letter to the Governor of the Philippines, Munoz Perez de las Marinas, peremptorily requesting him to recognize suzerainty over the islands. The letter was sent through a certain Harada. The Governor on receiving it was perplexed. He knew he had not enough troops to resist such a powerful neighbour and to gain time he sent two ambassadors to Hideyoshi, whilst he gave notice to his master of what was happening. But this embassy practically had no result, for



both ambassadors perished near the island of Formosa on their return journey. Harada had come by another ship to Manilla, and saying his credentials were lost with Father Gobo's ship, he could then pose as ambassador.

The Governor, not to be deceived, sent a second embassy to Hideyoshi, and asked four Franciscans to accompany it. Father Peter Baptista was at first loathe to accept the mandate. He consulted several theologians as to the possibility of going to Japan without incurring the excommunication. He was told on all sides that going in an ambassadorial character he was in no way violating his obedience to the Bull. Satisfied with this answer he sailed for Japan. Arrived at Fushimi, he presented his credentials to Hideyoshi, together with magnificent presents. The ruler was immensely flattered and permitted the Franciscans to stay as hostages, until a satisfactory answer should come from the king of Spain. Father Peter Baptista then went to Nagaski to see the Bishop Martinez, and in the meantime three more Franciscans arrived, bearers of still richer gifts for the Kubosama. As neither the State nor Church allowed them any sphere of action they took a small house and hospital for lepers outside the city and carried on their priestly duties.

We might ask how they did so in face of the Bull? They based their conduct on a permission granted to the Franciscans in 1586 by Sixtus V to preach anywhere in the East Indies, and Japan was considered by them as included therein. Thus they carried on their ministry, in spite of the Bishop Martinez's refusal to allow them to do so. For the Brief of Sixtus V precisely said that this privilege should keep its force even if the Bishop for any reason whatsoever should oppose it. Thus they gave full vent to a zeal which they, the Franciscans, Fathers Baptista and Rodriguez, themselves afterwards recognized as being mistaken and imprudent. What further encouraged the zeal of the Franciscans was the piety and ardour with which the people flocked once more to assist at the public services of the Church. Their former cessation of these they imputed to the timidity and over-caution of the Jesuits. In vain did the Fathers warn them that they were imperilling the whole Christian body; in vain did the very heathen remonstrate with them on arousing anew the ire of the Kubosama. This was to infringe, in a second instance, the diplomatic conditions laid down. Notwithstanding, they braved those conditions in Osaka and Nagasaki, where the Jesuits received them with the greatest cordiality. In the latter sea-port town so cautiously had the Jesuits, in spite of penal laws, carried on their work of evangelization that the festival was

celebrated of the conversion of the last pagan citizen, and Nagasaki became the first Christian town in Japan. But the coming of the Friars disturbed this hidden and peaceful worship of a whole city. Their public services excited suspicion and by sound of trumpet the Christians were prohibited from attending Mass or sermon, or from praying at a crucifix erected outside the walls.

After the banishment of the Friars, the Church in Nagasaki returned to its former obscurity and tranquillity. This was mainly brought about by the conversion of the Governor. From being a fanatic hater of Christianity, his hatred had changed into admiration. The discretion of the Jesuits, their modesty and the exemplary conduct of the Christians, had made him search into the tenets of the new religion. It was the mystery of the Incarnation which struck him so profoundly and which was in such marked contrast with the Japanese hero-worship. To him it seemed not at all inconceivable that a God should become man for His creatures. But that a man like Taiko-Sama, stained by every vice should be lifted to divine honours, this inconsistency it was, so repugnant to common sense and destructive of public morality, that made him embrace Christianity. Thus the persecutor became the avowed champion. And what is most remarkable in the history of Japan is that it was not in a time of prosperity, but in the season of adversity that conversions were most numerous. Whilst the edict of persecution was in force a very large number of feudal chiefs and their vassals and governors and their families and household embraced the faith. Truly did they count to the full the cost of so precious a heritage, buying it with their life.

About this time Peter Martinez, the new Bishop of Japan, arrived at Nagasaki. He was received at court with the same kindness and consideration which had been invariably shown to the Jesuits. So little would have been needed to induce Taiko-Sama to sheath the sword of persecution now suspended in the air, that many writers have imputed his subsequent treatment of the Christians not to any animosity for that religion, but to diplomatic prudence. Unfortunately once more, alas! the imprudent zeal of the Franciscan missionaries ruined the cause they were longing to extend. Their open defiance of his commands convinced the Taiko-Sama that the words of the boastful Spaniard were true, and that the ruin of his throne was contemplated. Guards, therefore, were set over their house and that of the Jesuits. This signal of war, far from intimidating the Christians, filled them with joy and exultation. Justo Ukondono rode to the Jesuits' house to congratulate

them on their good fortune. The two sons of the Governor of Miako likewise entered the city to share the fate of their brethren. The elder of these two princes having assembled his household to acquaint them with his fate, they all declared : " Let us go that we may die with him ! "

The younger brother, fearing his father might be implicated, went to inform him boldly of his conversion. He declared he sought not his own safety but his father's, to whom he owed a two-fold debt of gratitude, one for the temporal life he had given him, the other for the eternal life he would bestow in putting him to death. To which this stoic Japanese answered that passionately as he had always loved his son, yet with his own hand would he give the death blow if duty should so order it. And undaunted courage such as this was shown by the whole Christian body. As soon as it was known that the Taiko-Sama wished to have a census of his Christian subjects, men, women and children flocked to Miako to inscribe their names upon the lists, hoping thereby to win the martyr's crown.

Among these aspirants for martyrdom was an old warrior in the eightieth year of his age and the first of his conversion. Longing as he did to die for Jesus he considered passive endurance sheer cowardice, and before he shed his blood for his faith he would give some hard blows for it. In vain did his son assure him that if he would merit the martyr's crown, he must not resist the sword. But, entering one day into the apartment of his daughter-in-law, he was so touched with seeing her and her servants making their grave-clothes, that he resolved to die as they, unresisting.

The Emperor, however, did not intend to injure the Jesuits, or to sacrifice the Christians wholesale. He told the Bishop his edict was directed solely against the Spanish Franciscans who were condemned to lose their ears and noses and then to be crucified. And as a warning to the Christians, twelve who had most frequently visited their Church were included in the sentence, some children, one Jesuit father and two Jesuit novices. These last might have been released with tactful representation, but the Provincial, fearing for the whole body of Christians, refrained from further arousing the monarch's anger. Deep was his emotion when he received the martyrs' ears. Bursting into tears of pity and joy he offered them up to heaven : " Behold O Divine Saviour, the first fruits of our labours in Japan. Grant that this blood poured forth upon the earth may make it fruitful in faithful souls, who shall glow in love for Thy Name in this unknown and distant quarter of the globe ! " The band of martyrs themselves were led in carts about the city of Miako,

their sentence being carried on large poles before them. Instead of the usual insults and derision, they were cheered by the silent sympathy of the crowd. Indeed, when the children's cart went past, many were moved to tears. The little ones stood with hands bound behind them, their faces streaming blood, whilst their innocent voices broke forth in hymns and joy.

Nagasaki was the town appointed for the martyrdom. Outside the gates a halt was contrived by the friendly Governor so that the martyrs might make their confessions. Whilst a Jesuit who contrived to be there received the vows of the two novices, Father Rodriguez, the king's interpreter, also was there. Father Peter Baptist, the Franciscan, when all around were honouring him as a martyr, humbly on his knees asked pardon of the Jesuit for the injury that he now felt he and his brethren had brought on the mission. Father Rodriguez similarly on his knees craved forgiveness of the Franciscans on behalf of the Society, if haply aught had been said or done contrary to Christian charity. Then with the tenderest expressions of esteem and affection, the two fathers embraced each other. Thus we see that however divergent the policy of the Jesuits and the Franciscans had been, they mingled their blood in witness to One Faith, One Lord, One Baptism. The guards, filled with wonder, exclaimed: "What manner of men are these, who go to death as others to a banquet! Whoever saw so much suffering and so much joy! A hymn of triumph and a felon's death?" Their amazement was increased when, approaching the site of execution, the two martyrs burst forth into exclamations of joy and devotion on seeing their crosses; whilst the child Lewis, learning which of the small crosses was his, ran forward and embraced it eagerly, like another Andrew. He was only twelve years of age and might have escaped, but preferred to die with the fathers. Nor was the devotion of these children but a momentary impulse. Several days elapsed between the facial mutilation and the execution, during which time their courage was tested by hunger, exposure to cold and the jolting of the cart. In vain did the Governor offer them safety, favour and promotion; in vain did the parents plead their grey hairs. A dense crowd had assembled round the hill, and troops were placed at the foot, so that none but the nearest relatives could approach the site. A solemn silence reigned throughout that mighty multitude; every voice was hushed; every heart and eye fixed upon the victims lying on their crosses. When, at the given signal, the crosses were raised, a sob as from the surging ocean swept over the plains and reached the ears of the dying saints. In jubilant strains they answered and sang the Benedictus, which Father Peter Baptist had begun.



The children then asked him to intone the *Laudate Pueri*, but absorbed in prayer, he heard them not. They started themselves and sang like soaring larks, until their voices were hushed in death. By each cross stood an executioner, who at a given signal, thrust his spear into the heart of the victim. Thus in a joyous throng those first martyrs of Japan entered heaven on the 5th February, 1597. They were twenty-six in number; three Jesuits, six Franciscans, three children, and the rest were Japanese. Paul Miki, the Japanese Jesuit, out of devotion to the Passion asked that they might be executed on a Friday. He had this consolation and having converted two of the guards on the way, he died saying the words: "Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Once more the scenes of the early Church were witnessed. Any who through cowardice had fallen off once more boldly confessed their faith. Whilst the neophytes, fearless of the guards, rushed to the crosses and steeped their veils and handkerchiefs in the blood of the martyrs and even tore off portions of their robes, working therewith many miracles. Father Pedro Martinez, S.J., who had been appointed by Sixtus V. first Bishop of Japan, was present at this martyrdom, and it was his privilege to send to Rome the acts of the proto-martyrs, of which he himself had been an eye-witness. This martyrdom was followed by a fresh blow to the Church. There was a fresh importation of Christian warriors into Corea, and a new edict published for the banishment of the Jesuits. Churches were being everywhere destroyed, the colleges in the dominions of the Christian chiefs being broken up and the students scattered to their homes when the Taiko-Sama died. Failure had marked the latter part of his reign. Corea, won by the blood of his Christian subjects, had been lost through his absurd vanity. At the same time Japan was devastated by frightful storms and a succession of earthquakes, one of which destroyed the magnificent city and palace he had built up for himself. But no misfortune could touch the pride of this man, who died after having placed himself among the idols of Japan. During his lifetime he had a statue of himself set up for adoration, and after his death a temple was erected and he was placed among the number of the war gods. No step could have been more favourable to the Christian religion. Everyone knew how proud, ambitious, debauched, cruel and sordid had been their great Taiko-Sama. If the other gods of Japan were like him, utterly vile must the divinities of Japan be, and totally unworthy of adoration. Thus thousands who had been deaf to the Fathers' arguments were brought over to Christianity by this monstrous act of idolatry demanded by the Taiko-Sama.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## HEROISM OF JAPANESE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

WITH the death of the Taiko-Sama, the Corean war came to an end and the Church had breathing space in which to grow and flourish. But, alas! it was only the lull in the storm which was gathering up its forces to break in four-fold fury. As the prince was in his minority, the Taiko-Sama had sworn-in forty-nine of his feudal lords to act as a council of regency and to be faithful to his young heir. But his chief minister, Tokugawa Iyeyasu, was as faithless to his oath as Taiko-Sama had been to his sworn word to Nobunanga, and usurped the throne under the title of Daifu-Sama.

The Commander-in-Chief, Augustine, faithful to the oath he had taken to Taiko-Sama, leagued together with others of like fidelity against Daifu-Sama's usurpation. In the pitched battle that followed he was utterly defeated and taken prisoner. He could have eluded his captors by the act, honorable among his countrymen, of suicide. But the law of God forbade it, and with noble courage he submitted to his fate. When led into the presence of one of the victorious generals who had been his bosom friend, the Prince wept at the sight of the fallen chief. Augustine seeing it addressed him with great dignity: "Sir, you know what I once was, and you see what I have now become. I have therefore nothing new to say, but only one request to make at your hands. It is not my life I ask; had not the law of God forbidden it I had never have been brought alive into your hands to-day, All I crave is a Jesuit father who may prepare me to die as a Christian." The request was refused and, deprived of all human help, Augustine threw himself upon the mercy of God. Never, in his most glorious victories, had his courage shone forth so conspicuously as on this, the day of his death and degradation. Nobly and grandly he went to his humiliation, knowing that his Master had first drunk of this cup, whilst the pagans condemned with him loudly gave vent to their despair and disgrace. Placing a picture of Our Lady three times on his head—the greatest honour that can be paid to a person or thing—he fell upon his knees calm and unmoved. With the cry on his lips, "Jesus! Mary!" this great man, a hero in the world's eyes, a saint in the eyes of the Church, died. Since the hour of his conversion to the day of his death, he had zealously promoted Christianity and defended it against all hostile attacks. To this one object had been devoted his military talents, his high renown, his wealth and power, and he had died because of his scrupulous fidelity to his old liege lord against a usurper. His wife and

daughter were harboured by the Jesuits of Nagasaki, and later Daifu-Sama extended a free pardon to them.

Another Christian of note who perished in this unhappy war was Grace, the queen of Tango. Her husband had sided with Daifu-Sama, but when he went to the war, fearing his wife might fall into the hands of the enemy, he gave orders that in case of their near approach she should be put to death. This saintly woman was idolized by all about her, and terrible was their consternation when this barbarous command was about to be put into execution. She consoled and calmed them as only a Christian could. "O! my children be not afflicted! Death to a Christian is but the passage from a temporal life to one that is eternal. Do, therefore, your Master's orders without fear or sorrow. But remember that God forbids you to lay violent hands on yourselves, and I, your queen, forbid it likewise. Rather embrace the Christian religion, then I shall die, content."

Whilst Grace retired to pray the rooms were filled with explosives. Then embracing all her attendants tenderly, she unloosed the silken robes from her neck, and with perfect serenity offered herself to the executioner. Shortly after, in the terrible explosion that followed, the palace was blown up with all the inmates. Her husband's grief was uncontrollable. Hearing that the Jesuits had collected her half-charred bones for the purpose of Christian interment, he himself assisted at the funeral and was over-awed by the solemnity. Though he protected the Jesuits and permitted his subjects to be Christians, yet he never embraced the religion of which his wife had been so bright an ornament. The public execution of Augustine and his compeers put an end to any further plotting against the usurpation of Daifu-Sama. In spite of outward kindness to individual Christians he did not repeal the penal laws of the Taiko-Sama, nor did he check the persecution waged by petty monarchs, in which many hundreds of the best and noblest men of Japan perished.

The king of Higo was the first of these to lift his hand against the Church. He passed sentence of outlawry on all his Christian subjects, thus depriving them at a blow of office and rank, home and revenue. Food and shelter from their countrymen was forbidden them and they were prohibited from seeking it elsewhere. Without a murmur and for six months they endured this slow death from cold, hunger and fatigue. Then were they permitted the hospitality of their brethren at Nagasaki, where the Bishop and clergy devoted to them all the alms they possessed.

Whilst they were enjoying peace, another edict was published in Higo. All the Christians were ordered to betake themselves

to a certain bonze in order to perform some superstitious rite. Two noblemen, Simon and John, were first summoned as an example. Being friends of the Governor, he begged them to pretend compliance with the king's decree, or to have the ceremony privately performed in their house, or to bribe the bonze to overlook their refusal whilst swearing their acceptance. All these subterfuges were indignantly refused. At last some ruffians dragged John to the bonze's house and forcibly subjected him to the rite. On his vehement protest at this violence he was put to death.

When the Governor entered the house of Simon he was talking with his mother. With tears in his eyes he begged her to urge her son to comply and so save him from shedding the blood of a friend. But true Christian mother as she was, she encouraged him rather to suffer and to die. When the executioner arrived, being a friend of Simon's, he waited until the preparatory ceremonial had been accomplished. After praying before a picture of the Ecce Homo, warm water was called for that the ablutions preceding a joyful event might be gone through. Then, accompanied by three officers of the Confraternity of Mercy, one of whom carried a crucifix and the other two lights, Simon between his wife and mother, and followed by his servants, entered the hall. When he had distributed to his friends his rosary and other objects of devotion, they began the litany. Then, as he prostrated himself before a picture of Our Lord, his head was severed at a blow. His mother took it up exclaiming : " O dear head, resplendent now with celestial glory ! O happy Simon who hast had the honour of dying for Him who died for Thee ! My God, Thou didst give me Thy Son ; take now this son of mine sacrificed for love of Thee."

Then came Agnes weeping joyful tears over her husband's relics, for one day only was to separate her from him. Then entered Magdalen, the wife of John, and their adopted child Lewis. These condemned women thanked and praised and blessed God for the great privilege of dying for Jesus and on a cross like His. With ardent longings for martyrdom and to rejoin their beloved ones, in festive attire they set off in palanquins for the place of execution. Beside the litters walked the Brothers of Mercy to keep up their courage. But their heartening words were quite unheeded now. The mother of Simon asked to be tied as tightly as possible so that she might feel the nails of Jesus. She spoke so eloquently from her cross that the officer, fearful of the effect of her stirring words, stabbed her to death at once.

Magdalen was crucified next, and opposite to her, her little son Lewis, who asserted loudly he was not afraid to die. For some time mother and son gazed at each other. Then Magdalen summing up her strength, said: "Son we are going to heaven. Take courage and cry with your last breath, Jesus, Mary!" "Mother, you shall be obeyed," was the answer. Though they hacked and pierced him through and through, the child uttered no cry, but silently with his mother passed into heaven.

Agnes, young and lovely like her Roman namesake, alone remained. Her very beauty arrested the butchers from the destruction of something so fair. Laying herself upon her cross, she waited peacefully as if in an angel's arms. No official would give the death stroke, so a hired ruffian did so with many rude blows. For a terror to the pagans, the bodies were left upon the crosses for a year and a day. Then the Christians reverently gathered the hallowed remains and interred them in the Church at Nagasaki.

The Brothers of Mercy who had fortified the other martyrs in their sufferings were the next to be called up. What their mode of punishment should be perplexed the Governor. "What shall I do with these men? Death they rejoice in as the acquisition of an empire, and they go to exile as a slave to freedom. The cross is a royal throne, which they mount with pleasure and occupy with pride. I will therefore contrive for them a fate which shall make death under any form whatever a boon to be desired, but not to be attained."

Within the city there was one of those cage-prisons, where the king's debtors were detained. Here exposed to heat, cold and the gaze of the passers-by, the victims lay huddled on the accumulated filth of years. And for years did the steadfast Brothers submit to this lingering torment, until at last one died and the others were cut to pieces by the exasperated tyrant.

According to the custom of Japan, children had to suffer the same fate as their parents. For the Christians this was a double joy, for loving their children passionately they desired only to convey them to heaven in their arms. One little fellow called Peter was asleep when they came to fetch him. He was so tiny that he had to run to keep up with his soldier conductor. On arriving at the site of execution he saw the mutilated corpses of his father, uncle and cousin stretched upon the ground. Far from being dismayed he looked up smiling into the face of his executioner. This look so unnerved the man that he sheathed his sword and went away. Two others attempted the task, but that innocent smiling face disarmed them. At last a common slave was hired, who hacked and hewed to pieces the martyr-



child. Similar scenes to these were occurring in the kingdom of Hirado which was giving its rich tribute of martyrs to the Church.

We mentioned before, Damian, the blind man of Yamaguchi, who enkindled and kept alive Christianity in that city. When the Jesuits were expelled thence, all the arduous duties of a missionary fell to his lot. He it was who fostered the infant Church by catechizing, preaching and baptizing, visiting the sick, burying the dead. When the choice of life or death was offered to the brave old man, he chose to shed his blood for that truth which he had spent his life in propagating. Lest the Christians should give him honourable interment he was hewn to pieces. His death was the signal for innumerable massacres in several kingdoms of Japan. But it was in Arima, once the stronghold of a flourishing Christianity, that heathen enmity was most unrelenting. The king of that country had caused all his children to be brought up Christians. But in the eldest the vices of his pagan ancestors seemed so deeply embedded that Christianity could not get properly rooted. In order to win influence with the Emperor he divorced his wife and married the daughter of the Emperor, a sin at which his Christian father connived. Faithless to his God, he was to be faithless to his father, whose throne he usurped and whom he finally executed.

This reverse brought the old king to his senses and he prepared for death without a murmur and in the spirit of deepest penitence. He refused what was deemed the more honourable manner of death, suicide. "I lack neither courage nor resolution to die by my own hand. But the law of God forbids it, and I choose rather to pass for a coward in the eyes of men than a rebel in the sight of God." As there was no priest to encourage and soothe his dying moments, his wife Justa sustained his fortitude. Having had the Gospel of the Passion read to him he patiently submitted to his fate. He left two sons by a second marriage, Francis aged eight, and the other not more than an infant. These innocents so aroused the jealous suspicions of their unnatural half-brother that they, too, had to be put out of the way.

One day when their pagan sister-in-law was treacherously caressing these children and asking them why they did not denounce the God of the Christians, and why not put the beads from off their necks, Francis spoke up boldly: "I would rather die than give up God. And if I put the beads from off my neck people might say I have given up my God." For three months they were immured in the vaults of their own palace, and from a Christian servant, Ignatius, we learn how these children prepared for death. They spent most of their time in prayer,

and their fasting was so rigorous that they could hardly be prevailed on to take enough nourishment to support life. On the night of his death Francis, aged eight, subjected himself to some extra abstinence as atonement for what he thought an unkind word to his keeper. And long after his little brother was asleep he kept watching in prayer, which he aided by saluting a picture of Our Lady.

Ignatius, knowing what was going to happen, hinted at the excellent custom of recommending each night one's soul to Our Lady. At once the child said: "By the Passion and death of Jesus Christ be mindful of me this night, O Mary! Mother and Mistress of my heart, to you I commend both body and soul. I put my eternal safety into your hands." Taking holy water he laid himself down to sleep by his brother, and Ignatius, harrowed with grief, retired. Next morning when the servant returned he found both princes swathed in the purple of their own blood. The perpetrator of this crime kept filling up his cup of iniquity. Having destroyed churches, banished the Jesuits, and exiled the Christians, he published an edict commanding all to embrace idolatry or die.

At the first muttering of the storm the Christians had enrolled themselves into a Confraternity of Martyrs. Besides the usual conditions of prayer and fasting and penance of such associations, the members pledged themselves to suffer loss of property, banishment, martyrdom, for the love of Jesus. This Confraternity extended all over Japan and even children hastened to enrol themselves in it. Well might they do so for in no country have children, whole squadrons of them, played such a leading rôle in the ranks of the martyrs as the children of Japan. A celebrated bonze was sent for to Arima, with the command to shake the faith of the neophytes. He preached and railed in vain against Christianity. No one would listen, and if they listened it was only to refute his calumnies. And the Christians never appeared before him without their rosaries around their necks. The very court ladies, with jewelled rosaries of sparkling stones, flouted the lying priest. Nor could imprisonment, ill usage, nor starvation shake their constancy.

Michael, the apostate king, gnashed his teeth for rage at his opposition at the very foot of his throne. He had been defeated by children and women. He would try what could be effected in another quarter. Amongst his vassals was one, Thomas, noted for his prowess on sea and land. When the blunt soldier heard the purport of his summons to court he could hardly contain his impatience. He flatly told the king that as a soldier who deserted his colours would be guilty of death, so he should

consider himself the most dastardly of creatures were he to fail in the allegiance he had sworn at his baptism to the King of Kings. He himself hated traitors and treason, and would prefer death itself to the baseness of committing the one or of being associated with the other. The brave man knew nothing but death would be the penalty of his avowal, so going to the Jesuits he prepared himself for the end. When induced to seek safety in flight, he answered with spirit: "Far from flying from martyrdom, I would go to the ends of the earth to seek it. And as for my children I love them too deeply to deprive them of a blessing which I esteem above kingdoms."

The next day the governor invited Thomas to dinner. He went, giving a last farewell to his wife and children. Whilst at table he was stabbed dead by his host, and a few hours after his brother suffered the same fate. His mother and his two sons were also condemned to death and broke into an ecstasy of joy at their lot, whilst the wife and daughter who were spared gave way to uncontrolled grief and lamentation at the loss of their crown of martyrdom. When the two sons of Thomas heard that they were, like the father, to die for Jesus, they promptly answered: "There is nothing we desire more. When is it to be?" "Just now," said the servant, "go and take leave of your mother and prepare yourselves for death." Smiling, these children ran to obey. They distributed their toys among their playfellows, and made parting presents to their nurses. Then, clothing themselves in white, they knelt down before their mother saying: "Goodbye, dear mother, we are going to be martyred." And that Christian mother, with breaking heart but dry eyes, said in the moment of her bitter bereavement: "Go dear children in the remembrance of Him Who died for you. Tread courageously in the footsteps of your father and uncle. Behold them stretching out their arms to help you! Behold His saints and angels with crowns prepared to set upon your heads. Behold Jesus Christ Himself inviting you to His sweet embraces! When you reach the place of execution show yourselves to be indeed His followers by your contempt of death. Fall on your knees, loosen your collars, join your hands, bow down your heads, and cry out with your last breath, Jesus! Mary! Oh, how wretched I am that I cannot be with you in that hour." Then hiding her face in the arms of her little one she gave way to such uncontrollable weeping that the very soldiers, moved with compassion and fearing to yield to their feelings, tore the children from her embraces and flung them into the palanquin which was to bear them and their grandmother to martyrdom. The valiant old servant Martha fell under the sword which was reeking with the blood of her little ones.

After this execution eight of the principal citizens of Arima were summoned before the king to abjure their faith. Five alas ! yielded, but four afterwards repented. Fire was the penalty pronounced on all these and their families. As soon as the sentence was known one of the Jesuits came from Nagasaki to help the victims, whilst thousands of Christians flocked from all parts to be present at the great sacrifice. Never has the Church presented such a scene of triumph and spiritual exaltation. For three whole days that vast multitude encamped in the open fields, patiently awaiting the great hour of sacrifice. The sight of this great army of spectators filled the craven king with dread and he delayed the deed. Would they perchance take the town and oust him from his throne ? Fool that he was, what cared these saints for such baubles ! Impatient of the delay, some of the gravest waited on the king to inform him that they were there only to witness the ceremony. He could see plainly that not one of that army had arms upon them, and that the last thing they would do would be to deprive these heroes of their crowns. In a wide plain just beneath the castle, the stakes had been prepared. Here the martyrs, with hands bound and in festive robes, were led out. They were accompanied by forty thousand Christians bearing lights, with garlands on their heads and singing the Litany of Our Lady.

Among these was James, a boy of eleven, and Magdalen who had taken a vow of virginity. These as well as their elders all embraced their stakes, whilst Jaspar the Chief of the Confraternity of the Martyrs, unrolling a banner on which was depicted Our Lord bound to the pillar as they to their stakes, exhorted them all to perseverance. Even as he spoke, the crackling of fire was heard and the bright tongue of flame leaped up to lick as it were the feet of the victims. As one man the whole of that vast crowd fell on their knees awaiting with the oft repeated Jesus ! Mary ! the consummation of the holocaust, and above the wails and sobs of the beholders, and above the roaring of the flames, the dying voices of the martyrs were heard praising God and exhorting each other to constancy. For a moment all held their breath. Will the child's courage hold out ? He leaves his stake and rushes to his mother to throw his arms around her. And even whilst exhorting him to courage, they die locked in each other's arms.

The young Magdalen, picking up the embers from around her, lays them like roses upon her head. The bodies, scorched but not consumed, were carried off by the Christians, together with the charred stakes to the Church at Nagasaki, and there interred with the highest honour. In the kingdom of Arima, martyrdom



upon martyrdom followed, until the apostate king resigned his kingdom. He had done so only in the hope of getting a larger one from the Emperor, deluded by his chief adviser Safiori, who had been plotting to get Arima for himself.

## CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTIANITY INCREASES IN PROPORTION TO  
PERSECUTION

THE Taiko-Sama died in 1598. He it was who gave to the Church the first fruits of the glorious cohort of martyrs, the twenty-six who were crucified at Nagasaki on February 5th, 1597. Some authors have thought it was the imprudent fervour of the converted Japanese princes who, by forcing their religion on their subjects, aroused the opposition of the bonzes and finally brought persecution on the whole body of Christians.

However this may be, the first martyrdom was followed by a time, not only of peace but of remarkable prosperity for Christians. Their numbers had swelled to 1,800,000, so marvellously was fulfilled the word that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. What had helped to bring about this miraculous increase? It was the disgust of the Japanese at the deification of the last Emperor, a tyrant, covetous, proud and vicious. Yet the most splendid temple in the empire was built for him and his body deposited therein. By this idolatry the Jesuit missionaries reaped in return an immense harvest of souls, forty thousand in 1590, and thirty thousand in 1600.

Ieyasu, the Regent, having violated his oath to the former Emperor, put aside his heir and assumed imperial power under the title of Shogun. He received the Bishop Luiz Serqueyra, S. J., with a certain degree of favour and in the following year the Provincial of the Jesuits. There were about a hundred Jesuits in Japan at this time. Dominicans and Augustinians began to arrive to swell the ranks of the missionaries, and all promised favourably. But it was only the lull in the storm that was to devastate the Church in Japan; only a breathing space before one of the most awful persecutions recorded in the history of the Church. Even during this time there had been local persecutions taking place, as in Higo where many martyrs suffered. But it was in 1617 that the persecution became general and for twenty years was carried on with a ferocity and violence surpassing even Nero's.

What was it that changed Ieyasu's policy of peace to the Christians into one of unrelenting hatred? The greed for gold of another traitor like Judas. The vaunted boast of the Spanish captain had dropped the first seeds of suspicion into the minds of the rulers. But the disinterested lives of the missionaries wholly wrapped up in the spiritual interests of the Japanese people had given the lie to this libel. To the Dutch Pro-

testants must belong the everlasting shame of trampling out the expiring embers of Christianity in Japan. Their home-spun materials and cheeses finding no market with a people accustomed to what was costly and rare in food and raiment, they determined to oust out their rival traders the Spanish and Portuguese, whose choice wares appealed to a luxurious race.

The Englishman Adams was allied with the Dutch in his betrayal of Christianity. They plied the mind of the Shogun with tales of the overweening ambition of the king of Spain, whose emissaries the missionaries were. They insinuated that these were not so much Gospel preachers as pioneers for political conquest. They related a fact, but with a false reason, how England, Sweden, Denmark, and Holland had banished men so noted for scheming. And to give colour to these slanders there occurred at this time the unfortunate episode of the Spanish Franciscan, Sotelo, who, regardless of the advice of his superiors and brethren, started on an imprudent embassy. Is it surprising, then, that the pagan monarch was smitten with dread of men whose intrigues—the Dutch said—brought about their banishment by so many Christian sovereigns? So this tyrant who made sixty thousand invocations daily to Amida to pardon his crimes, issued straightway, whilst his wrath was hot within him, a terrible edict for the total extirpation of Christianity.

All members of Religious Orders, whether native or European, were to be expelled the country, the churches that had been erected were to be pulled down and Japanese converts were to be called on to renounce their faith. Some three hundred persons were shipped from Japan on October 25th, but eighteen Jesuit Fathers and nine lay brothers escaped and lay concealed. It was found that the palace itself was filled with Christians. So the Shogun was obliged to begin his work of extirpation among the members of his own household. Fourteen of those in immediate attendance on his own person or those of the queen were banished. Among these was that Corean Julia, who from her desolate rock isle wrote to the Jesuits of the wonderful consolation with which her soul overflowed in her desert wilderness. Then there was Didacus, a young man of such holy mind and innocent life, that his name passed into a proverb and was used for any youth who had changed his heathen vice into Christian holiness. The irate monarch was still further enraged on hearing that the Jesuit Fathers had attended the execution of a Christian criminal and orders were given that every person not conforming to the religion of the State was to be burned alive. Next morning what was the horror of the tyrant on finding that a stake had been fixed by the Christians before

their doors as a symbol of their readiness to die for Christ. And the streets and roadways so bristled with stakes that it was clear that to exterminate the Christians would be to make Miako into a desert place. Bribes, threats, caresses, were first had recourse to, but in vain. Then began tortures unheard of. Men, women and children of every age and rank were tied naked into sacks filled with sharp straws and other wounding substances. Carried about thus, and exposed to the jeers of the mob, they were thrown aside in huddled-up heaps, and after exposure to the winter cold were burnt in piles. Many were tortured before death by the insertion of sharp spikes under the nails of their hands and feet, whilst some poor wretches by a refinement of horrid cruelty were shut up in cages and there left to starve with food before their eyes.

One author writes : " One may search the grim history of early Christian martyrology without finding anything to surpass the heroism of the Roman Catholic martyrs. Burnt on stakes made of crosses, torn, limb from limb, buried alive, they yet refused to recant." Another non-Catholic writer says : . . . " It has never been surpassed for cruelty and brutality on the part of the persecutors, nor for courage and constancy on the part of those that suffered." To some Christian virgins living in retirement the same hideous device was resorted to as in the case of St. Agnes. But no angel coming to shield these maidens of Japan, they mutilated their own faces with such disfigurement that the tempters fled away in horror at the sight. And this last resource was resorted to over and over again all over the empire by high-born women and tender girls, who esteemed their beauty as naught in comparison with their purity.

Torture proving useless, the Shogun began his wholesale banishment of the Christians out of Japan. Most of the Jesuits had dispersed in various disguises through the country. But now came the sad breaking up of their college, so flourishing until then in Miako. It was fifty years since Father Villela had won that haughty city for Christ, and through vicissitudes of every kind the fathers had managed to keep open the college or return to it when the storm of persecution had blown over. Even heathens respected this seat of learning, to which flocked courtiers, merchants, men of every class who wanted to learn science. So great was the repute of the Jesuits as scientists that high honours and emoluments were open to them if they would continue their rôle of professors, whilst casting aside that of missionaries. That they did not do so, but rather chose death, should be a refutation of the many slanders spread against these noble and utterly disinterested men.



A further testimony to the universal reverence they inspired may be found in this fact. In spite of the edict they were permitted to say a farewell Mass publicly in their church, and afterwards to say good-bye to their sorrowing flock. Immense multitudes attended this last Mass which united the Hosannas of Palm Sunday and the pathos of the Last Supper. When the Mass was over, the weeping Fathers, amid a weeping people, performed the ceremony of the stripping of the altars. Sacred vessels and vestments were confided to the most reliable of the Christians, and then were the doors flung open for the Shekinah, the light of their eyes was gone.

Next morning a guard of soldiers conducted the Fathers to Nagasaki, where they were joined by a number of persons both clerical and lay from every part of the empire. The sixty-three Jesuits, with converts of every age and sex and condition, were embarked for Miako, whilst twenty-three others, with a large number of Franciscans, Dominicans and Augustinians were sent off to the Manilla Islands. With this last went Justo Ukondono, king of Tamba, again in poverty and disgrace for the sake of Jesus Christ. But this time the sentence of exile was from his native shores. Most of the missionaries with whom he embarked returned at different intervals in various disguises. But he remained at Manilla. He had been received here by the Governor with all the courtesy, honour and affection due to a man of such tried and eminent merit. Yet Justo was so humble that to the last day of his life he could not understand why such honour had been lavished on him. To be staunch and true to Christ his King at all costs seemed to him only the natural thing, and had no savour of the heroic in his eyes. "I have done nothing for the king of Spain, why then should I look for favours at his hands?" he would say bluntly. And when the Governor offered to procure a pension for him he answered: "How can I accept from the hand of man that which I have abandoned in spirit as well as in fact for the love of God?" And when shortly after he lay on his deathbed this was all the legacy he left his children: "I bequeath them nothing, and I recommend them to no man's care; it is enough of honour and enough of riches that they have suffered for the faith of Jesus Christ." He breathed his last surrounded by the best and noblest in Manilla, and was borne to the grave with all the honours of a king. Most touching are the letters written by Justo to his son on the privilege of suffering for Jesus Christ, and the infinite joy found in tribulation.

In this same year of the banishment, 1614, the Christians suffered a great bereavement in the death of the Bishop of

Japan, Luiz Serqueyra. On his arrival in the country he had found a flourishing church, golden in its fervour and sanctity, and his love and care had gone out to his infant flock. From his residence at Nagasaki he had made innumerable journeys to the most distant parts of the kingdom. Wherever he went thousands had flocked around him for instruction and confirmation. No city was too distant, no road too rough, no mountain too rugged or too high for his zeal. And whenever he returned to Nagasaki from these arduous visitations he had the joy of feeling there was not a heart in that city but beat for the love of Jesus Christ. This entirely Christian city had been divided into five parishes, each governed by a native priest.

But with the great edict all these bright prospects vanished. Amid the crumbling ruins of a church built with the tears and labours and blood of the Jesuits, the Bishop died literally of a broken heart. Already were the kingdoms of Higo, Hirado and Yamaguchi deluged with the blood of the martyrs. And now an army of ten thousand men had been let loose on Arima to exterminate religion by fire and sword. Wherever these troops arrived they set up a tribunal surrounded by a palisade in the most public part of the city. Here the leading Christians were dragged by the hair and cast into the enclosure. They were thrown upon the ground, trampled under foot, beaten until they were half dead, and their legs by a cruel contrivance broken between two pieces of wood. The most daring were then put to death and their bodies cut into pieces were cast to the birds of prey.

At Kuchinotzu sixty Christians were taken, five and five at a time, with their hands tied behind them, lifted high up into the air and then dashed upon the ground with so much violence that blood gushed from the ears, eyes and mouths of the sufferers. Many of them were dreadfully lacerated, others had all their bones broken; and as if this were not sufficient torture, they were afterwards pricked and pierced with sharp instruments all over their bodies.

During all this tragedy of torment the Governor, affecting pity, urged them to have compassion on their poor selves. Deaf to all his entreaties a still more fiendish kind of torture was tried. The victim was made to lie flat on the ground and a stone which four men could hardly lift was placed on his back. Then by means of pulleys he was drawn up by his hands and feet so that the body was completely bent backwards, and the limbs crushed and broken. The fingers and toes were cut off, the teeth knocked out, the eyes forced out of their sockets, so that beheading at last came as a mercy to the poor victim. Others

still further mutilated had to climb up and down a flight of stairs for the amusement of their tormentors. Such scenes as these took place in every city of note in the kingdom of Arima. But more especially was Nagasaki, the Christian city, desolated for here the cruel Safiori had his headquarters.

In the second year of the persecution Iyeyasu died and was succeeded by his son under the second Shogun, who continued the work of his father with unrelenting fury. History has but one verdict on the diabolical atrocity and cruelty of this monster. This Shogun was far more cruel than his father, more determined and prompt in action and gifted with far more acuteness and penetration. He saw at once that however many Christians were put to death he would never succeed in extirpating their religion so long as one priest was left in the country to fortify the confessors, to animate the martyrs, to baptise and instruct the infidels who came into the Church by hundreds at every fresh deed of heroism.

Cute as the English Elizabeth was this monarch, and he hit upon the same device of hunting down the priests. To prevent any more missionaries coming into the country all the ports of Japan were closed to European vessels, whilst those of Hirado and Nagasaki were under the rigid surveillance of the officers of the Shogun. It was death to be convicted of being a priest, death to be found in the discharge of priestly functions, death to land a priest in the country, death to give him shelter. It was not only death to his host, but death to his ten next neighbours with their wives and children. Rewards were offered to anyone who betrayed a priest. The missionaries, therefore, to avoid compromising the safety of their brethren, left the towns and went to dwell in the woods and desert. In this way one of them lived for twenty years like John the Baptist in the wilderness. Others took up their abode in caves and in deserted stables, cupboards or cells constructed for them by the faithful in their houses. In one of these hiding places one of them lived during the intensest heat of summer for sixty days, the only air being from a chink in the boards, and the only nourishment bits of food at wide intervals. At night these hidden confessors sallied forth to instruct their flocks, baptise children and converts, to anoint the sick and dying, and to fulfil as many of their pastoral duties as prudence would allow.

To a Jesuit and a Franciscan were given the honour of beginning the long procession of priestly victims. From the age of seven John Baptist Machades had been filled with an ardent desire to preach the Gospel in Japan. His entrance into the Society brought about the fulfilment of his wish, and he laboured

holily on the Mission many years. One day he was going to Omura with his catechist when both were arrested and sent to the Capital. As contrary winds detained them at Canomi they were received there by the magistrate with every mark of courtesy and kindness. In spite of the terrible edict in force, the Christians flocked around the father to hear his heart-stirring words and to receive from him the Bread of Life. When he returned to his prison on the ship the sailors refused to shackle his limbs, so filled were they with veneration for his virtue. At Omura he found lying in the prison a great friend of his, the Franciscan, Father Peter of the Ascension. Immense was the joy of these friends on meeting in the same dungeon, and sweet and holy their conversation on their approaching death. On the night before their death the Franciscan in his simple-hearted gladness said that the desire of his heart and the object of all his prayer had been granted him, whilst Father Machades in great spiritual exaltation declared that the three happiest days of his life were, first, that on which he had entered the Society ; second, that on which he had put on chains for Christ ; third and most glorious of all, that on which he was to be enrolled amongst the martyrs. Having confessed and communicated each other, each bearing his crucifix, they set out for Calvary. Then giving each other the last kiss of peace, those two friends laid their heads with great joy on the block. The executioners, touched with pity at the grief of the Christians, allowed them to carry away the bodies. These sorrowed because they foresaw the dark and evil day for Japan, when the sheep and lambs of Christ would be left without shepherd or fold.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE GREAT MARTYRDOM

**A**BOUT this time six other religious began a still longer captivity in the prisons of Omura. Three were Dominicans, one a Franciscan, and the other two Jesuits, Father Charles Spinola and Ambrose Fernandez, a Brother of the Society. When first they were taken prisoners they were thrown into a sort of subterranean cave, huddled together and deprived of all light. Nor was their condition improved when they were later removed to one of those cage prisons where, scantily clothed and fed, they were exposed to all the changes of the weather. Many constantly fainted away from weakness and exhaustion, and some even died. Even their jailers were moved to pity and furtively brought food and drink to their victims, one of them for his charity meeting with a martyr's death. For four years these prison tortures were prolonged, and the heroic martyrs by their patience and prayers turned that loathsome prison into a sanctuary of God. The Holy Sacrifice was daily offered, then followed meditation, pious reading, the use of the discipline and every practice of the cloister. Starved as they were, extra fasts were imposed to prepare for the Great Day of the Lord, their martyrdom.

As for Father Charles Spinola, S.J., in spite of many illnesses and constant fever brought on by prison hardship, he never left off his hair shirt. All his religious life had been marked by extraordinary austerity, and during his twenty years apostolate in Japan never had he touched other food than rice and boiled herbs. From his childhood he had dreamed of martyrdom as other children dream of toys and pleasures. It was this life-long thirst which led him to Japan and which made him exclaim with overflowing joy when entering the prison of Omura: "Behold the place of my rest! There will I abide because I have chosen it."

Amid the sufferings of this imprisonment he writes: "Father, how sweet and delightful it is to suffer for Jesus Christ! I have learned this better by experience than I am able to express, especially since we are in those dungeons where we fast continually. The strength of my body fails me, but my joy increases as death draws nearer. O what a happiness for me if next Easter I shall sing the Alleluias of heaven in company of the blessed." In another letter to his cousin he says: "Oh if you had tasted the delights with which God fills the souls of those who serve Him and suffer for Him, how you would condemn

all that the world can promise ! I now begin to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, since for His love I am in prison where I suffer so much. But I assure you that when I am fainting with hunger God hath fortified me by His sweet consolations, so that I have looked upon myself as well recompensed for His service. And though I were yet to pass many years in prison, the time would appear short, through the extreme desire which I feel of suffering for Him who even here so well repays our labours. Besides other sicknesses, I have been afflicted with a continual fever for a hundred days, without any remedies or proper nourishment. All this time my heart was so full of joy that it seemed to me too narrow to contain it. I have never felt any equal to it and I thought myself at the gates of Paradise."

At last the joyful day of deliverance dawned. Thirty of the Christian prisoners, twenty-two being religious, were marched out to Omura, and partly by sea, partly by land, each with a rope round his neck and an executioner at his side, were landed at the old Christian city of Nagasaki. It was not considered prudent that they should enter the city, nevertheless thousands of Christians came forth to meet them, and flinging themselves at their feet, begged their blessing and their prayers.

Between the city and the sea there is a high hill. On this high altar of sacrifice only twenty-six years before Japan had offered her first fruits to the Lamb that was slain. Once again on the same hill and not twenty-five paces away, was a living holocaust to be offered to God. And, as in proof of Japan's fervour, the victims had multiplied five fold. On a high tribune adorned with costly tapestry, a throne had been erected for the Governor, who was to preside at this tragedy. He takes his seat and there is a long drawn suspense as if some chief actor in the piece were missing. All eyes turn to the town whence a joyous troop of people are issuing. They are dressed in gala robes, and joy beams on every countenance expressing clearly "Let us be glad and rejoice for the Marriage of the Lamb is come!" They were a hundred in number, men, women, children. Among the women was a widow, Isabella, and her little son, Ignatius, four years old. It was in her house that Father Spinola was staying when he was arrested and in the evening he had baptised her little one, just born. From his birth this wonderful child had been dedicated to enter the Society, and he had always said that he would be a martyr and his mother also. When he gave a present to anyone, he would say : "Take care of it, because I shall be a martyr some day." When therefore Father Spinola from his stake to which he had been bound, saw his old hostess Isabella he cried out : "Where

then is my little Ignatius?" The mother held him up saying: "Here he is my father, ready and glad to die for Jesus." Then she told the infant to ask the blessing of the good father who had made him a child of God. Instantly the little fellow fell on his knees and joined his tiny hands together in supplication.

This touching scene so moved the crowd that a surging wave of compassion swept over it. The Governor, fearing a reprieve, ordered the execution to proceed and at once three heads fell by the child's side and then his mother's. But he neither shrank nor changed colour, but with untrembling little fingers, loosening his own small collar, offered his neck to the sword. The rest of the victims were soon despatched and their heads fixed on poles opposite to their companions who were to be burnt at the stake. In order to facilitate apostacy, these had been tied but loosely, and the faggots had been placed twenty-five feet away. Whenever the flames swept on to consume the victim, water was cast upon it so as to enhance the agony of the condemned. Many died suffocated by the heated atmosphere. Father Kimura, a Japanese priest, lived three hours in the flames. And Father Spinola's body was afterwards found unburnt, with his soutane glued to his body by the combined action of fire and water.

Terrible beyond words as were the sufferings of this band of martyrs, two only seemed conscious of their pains. Both were Japanese and very young. Unable to bear such frightful torture, they had rushed out of the flames and, throwing themselves at the Governor's feet, had asked for an easier and quicker death. The Christians were appalled, fearing this was an apostacy, and one of the martyrs, Paul Nomgaski, a catechist, rushed after them to keep up their courage. Having done so he returned to his torments, whilst the two wavering ones were flung back into the flames and speedily consumed.

Thus on the 10th September, 1622, was accomplished what is called the Great Martyrdom. For three days the bodies, mutilated and charred, remained exposed to the view of the public, whilst night and day a guard hindered the faithful from carrying away the relics. One young Japanese called Leo, disguised as a guard, stealthily sought by night to get a hand of one of the martyrs. He was caught and, refusing to apostatize, won for himself the crown of martyrdom. After three days a great pile was erected on which was burnt whatever remained of the sacred bodies. Their ashes and the very earth stained with their blood were collected in sacks and cast into the open sea. And lest any particle of the precious relics should be secreted, the men charged with this task had to perform it stripped of all clothing.

In the North one of the principal pillars of the flourishing Church was the noble Louis Yemandono. One of the bravest of the empire he preached Christianity so often and so publicly to his vassals that his sermons had become a proverb. His two sons Michael and Vincent had the same ardour as their father, and desired not only to live for Christ, but much more to die for Him. When sentence of death fell upon his house, Yemandono began to dismiss with gifts all his servants. But all without exception begged that they might follow their master to death. On the 12th January, 1629, two hours before dawn, the soldiers arrived at his house. What was their amazement to find the whole family ready and waiting for death, with their hands tied behind their backs and cords around their necks. To save the soldiers the trouble of searching, many of the neighbouring Christians had come and united themselves with the family, making forty in all. Many were marched to the place of execution, two pages of the house, aged twelve, walking before and carrying a banner of Our Lady and a blessed candle. When these two were spared, not being included in the sentence, they threw themselves at the feet of the executioners saying: "We are Christians as well as the others, why may we not die like them? Yesterday you promised us this favour, if we came here to-day. Why do you not keep your word?"

Thecla, the daughter-in-law of Yemandono, with six young children and in immediate expectation of another, was among the victims. She had spent the days before martyrdom in prayer and in preparing for herself and her children wedding robes. When this princess arrived at the site of execution, calmly and without assistance she stepped from the car and throwing a rich mantle over her shoulders went to death with a modesty and composure that won the hearts of all. It was dark night before fire was set to the several piles. At first they were seen as pillars of cloud. But when the smoke cleared away, with eyes fixed on heaven and motionless forms, these forty shone forth as pillars of fire. There was a tense silence as the crowd held their breath in suspense. Then upon the mid-night air there was poured forth such a stream of melody that it seemed as if angels were intoning the glory of God, rather than Christians whose bodies were being slowly consumed by fire.

The heavenly joy was infectious and gripped the hearts of the Christians in the crowd, who also joined in the divine praises. Nor were they deterred by the hisses and execration of the pagan populace, whose pallor and terror showed them as the votaries, not of God, but of His enemy Amida. The music grew fainter as victim after victim bowed the head in death. But



it was the princess Thecla who drew forth the largest share of sympathy. Bound to her cross, still she animated her six children with smiles and words of comfort to suffer well. The youngest, only three years old, she held in her arms all through that fiery ordeal. Not a sigh did that burning extract from her lips. All her effort seemed to be to fan away the flame from the face of the child who clung to her breast. She kept caressing it and soothing it, wiping away its tears, hushing its cries and died with the little one folded so tight in her arms that it was almost impossible to separate mother and child.

If love is as strong as death, then never was such stupendous strength shown as that by which the Japanese martyrs manifested to the world how immense was their love for the Lord Jesus and the Lady Mary.

O Jesus-Sama ! O Santa Maria-Sama.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE EXTIRPATION OF PRIESTS

**I**T was the blow that was struck at the Christian priesthood that told most fatally on the Church in Japan. As long as there were left missionaries enough to aid, neither fire nor sword had prevented the progress of religion among the infidels. Indeed, in the three years when the persecution was at its height, it has been calculated that no fewer than 15,000 were received into the Church. But the thinning of the labourers from within, and the rigid exclusion of recruits from without, forced the charge of whole kingdoms to be thrust upon one poor missionary. His life became henceforth a series of stealthy marches by night, and of perilous concealments by day, Nevertheless, through the darkness went the pastor of souls seeking his scattered flock. What cared he for the rugged mountains that had to be scaled, or for the pathless forests and deep valleys that had to be traversed or for the perils of the frozen wastes and silent deserts? As long as a breath of life remained in him, or one soul had to be saved, he flouted hardships that to us appear incredible. Not only sickness and death helped on the Shogun-Sama in his policy of the extirpation of the priesthood, but the treachery of the Dutch formed the most potent factor in the worst persecution that the Church has ever known. Like Judas they daily betrayed their Lord in the person of His anointed priests, and for a few pieces of silver trafficked in the souls of Christ's apostles.

A Japanese convert called Joachim, had brought over in his ship two priests in the guise of merchants. The Dutch, suspecting this, seized the ship and delivered the contraband goods to the authorities at Hirado. This occurred just before the execution of Father Spinola, and he and his fellow priests were brought out of their dungeon to confront the suspected merchants. So touching was the sight of this noble religious in his ragged and unwashed soutane, with the bones protruding from his discoloured skin, that even the hardened traitors felt some touch of pity. But not for long. When the new arrivals declared themselves priests they were burnt and the rest of the crew decapitated.

On the 12th September five more religious and eleven Christians were burnt at the stake, and on the 15th their catechists received the same crown. Even the traitorous Dutch and English who assisted at these executions confessed they had never seen courage so sublime.

On the 1st November the Church of Japan lost still another of her illustrious labourers, the Jesuit Paul Navarro, who had been a year in prison at Shimabara. He had come to Japan when very young and in a year spoke the language fluently, with the elegance and facility of a born native. The kingdoms of Bungo and Nagato were the scenes of his fruitful labours, and even when persecution chased him from province to province he everywhere sowed and reaped the harvest of the Gospel. His arrest in the kingdom of Shimbara filled the governor with chagrin for he esteemed the father greatly. Instead of being consigned to the common prison he was put in the custody of a Christian and every facility allowed him for saying Mass, giving the Sacraments and preaching the Word. The governor himself constantly invited Father Paul to his house, so much did he like hearing the doctrines of Christianity and of conversing with this fascinating apostle. This magnetic power over others Father Paul had won by fierce self-conquest and self-abnegation. Thus he had changed his naturally passionate character into a unalterable sweetness which drew all hearts. He had a premonition that he would spend All Saints' Day in heaven. So, after Mass, he distributed his relics and his small belongings to the faithful. When the executioners came he said, smiling: "I count it an immense joy to shed my blood for those truths which I have been preaching in Japan for thirty years." With hands tied behind he was led barefoot to the stake. Two Japanese Jesuit Brothers were included in the sentence and a boy called Clement, who went before, singing litanies with a face so angelic that the heathens marvelled to behold him. The governor wept at having to consign to the flames such heroes, and a man of so great worth as Father Paul Navarro. If the Shogun only knew what a man he was condemning to death, surely he would refrain? He so hurried the execution that hardly had the flames reached the wood when the martyr was stifled with the fumes.

In the following year Father Angelis, a Jesuit, with fifty other Christians, some of whom were priests, were similarly burnt to death. He might easily have escaped, for he was absent when they came to seek him in his lodgings. But seeing the courage of his host partially give way under torture, he yielded himself up. He had the joy of converting eight during his passion, and his companion forty. Appearing before the governor in his religious habit, he said: "Sir, it is twenty-two years since I left Italy to come into these isles to instruct in the eternal truths the Japanese, of whose natural virtues and intellectual capacity I had heard so much. I have counted

as nothing the fatigues and perils inseparable from such an undertaking. Rather they serve to animate my courage, and death—if I should have the happiness to die for such a cause—would be the culmination of my desires. Behold me at your disposal, ready to undergo whatever your good pleasure may ordain.”

On the 4th December, these fifty mentioned above were led out to a public place in Yeddo, where the Shogun himself and a great concourse of nobility and princes had gathered to see them die. Greatly did they marvel that human nature could transcend such agony, torture and death. At the sight of their constancy forty idolaters were gained to the faith.

Among those seized at Yeddo was John Hara Mondo, a Japanese noble who was allied with the Shogun family. For several years his constancy and fidelity under the most ignominious treatment, had made him the admiration of the Church in Japan. He had been banished in 1612. But on his recall and refusal to apostatise, his fingers and toes had been cut off, a cross burnt upon his forehead, and he was once more sent into banishment. Riding at the head of the third group of martyrs, in company with Father Angelis who led the first band, and Father Calvery the second, Hara Mondo entered the lists at Yeddo. Their bodies were left hanging on the stakes till the Christians managed to carry off many of them. The execution of Hara Mondo made a deep impression on the country on account of his exalted station and the long sufferings he had endured.

At Yeddo, again, on the 29th of the same month, twenty-nine martyrs were burnt to death, among them a woman named Marie whose superhuman courage won over thirteen idolaters who afterwards suffered with them. Before they were tied to their stakes, to intimidate them eighteen children were martyred before their eyes under circumstances of most barbarous inhumanity. In one of the northern kingdoms of Japan the fury of the persecution fell on the head of John Goto, a noble whose wealth and birth opened to him all roads to honour. But, valuing Jesus Christ more than all these fleeting possessions, he suffered the loss of them and lived with his household in saintly retirement. Father Carvalho, the Jesuit, had taken up his residence with him. But at the first rumour of persecution he had retired into a remote valley where sixty Christians had followed him, and had erected cabins of bamboo. All these were discovered, and though in mid-winter, were stripped naked, and thus conducted to Sendai, the capital. They were left for three hours in freezing water and then threatened with fire. At which they all exclaimed: “O! happy we, to pass



through fire and water to the place of our repose ! ” On the next day they were again plunged up to the neck in a freezing lake. As with the martyrs of Sebaste, there were ready on the banks tents with hot baths and hot wine. Near the dying saints was Father Carvalho to keep up their courage. “ Have patience, Son, for yet a little while, and these torments will be changed into everlasting repose ; ” was his cheering word to one whose sobs bespoke agony. At this stirring appeal, the youth regained courage and expired sweetly just as another was proclaiming : “ Father my course is nearly finished ! ” “ Depart then in peace to God and die in His holy grace ! ” was the answer.

Thus comforted by their shepherd and singing the praises of Christ, the whole of this band of martyrs, showing not the least sign of weakness, fell asleep in our Lord. The guards and spectators retired. Towards midnight after fifteen hours of endurance, Father Carvalho went alone from his frozen death-bed to join that martyr band whose spirits were waiting to conduct him home.

In June of this same year the Provincial of the Jesuits and eight of the Society were burnt to death and with them several other religious. About the beginning of the persecution there were besides the Jesuits, who were a hundred in number, a few secular priests, and thirty religious of other orders. Only a few of the martyrdoms of these, have we been able to mention, although there is not one that would not bear recording at length. But when it is remembered that with the death of one priest, there would be a wholesale massacre of Christians, it may be judged how virulent and deadly were the measures taken for the extermination of Christianity in Japan. That they succeeded at all was due to the Shogun-Sama’s policy of the extirpation of the priesthood. As each new victim fell, and there was none who could land from abroad to take his place, it may be guessed how unshepherded was the lot of the poor hunted Christians.

Another cause of the searching thoroughness of this persecution lay in the zest with which the Shogun-Sama was aided by the petty monarchs. At Nagasaki, the new governor Bugendono, in order to win court favour, surpassed all his predecessors in fiendish cruelty. Their preconceived aim seemed not so much to uproot Christianity as to bring about apostacy. Hence slow, long-drawn tortues were invented, which lasted for days, and weeks, and months, and which without a special grace of God, human nature could never have withstood. Yet foremost in the ranks of these protracted sufferers were delicate

high-born women, and tender children. Some were placed in deep pits and nearly buried alive, whilst others had their limbs sawn off with blunt weapons, salt being sprinkled on the wounds to increase their agony. And to prolong still more the life of the martyr, physicians were at hand to administer cordials and restoratives. Some again were hung head downwards in a pit and lingered several days in an apoplectic condition; whilst others by means of a funnel forced down their throat, were made to swallow enormous quantities of water, which was afterwards forced out by violent pressure. Even the Dutch themselves, who were the original cause of all these evils, speak with horror of the deeds they witnessed in Hirado. The nails of the victims were violently wrenched out, holes bored in their legs and arms, great masses of flesh torn out of their bodies by the insertion of hollow reeds which were turned round like a screw; whilst others had forced up their nostrils, by long tubes, burning brimstone and sulphur. Not on solitary victims were these tortures inflicted, but on whole companies of Christians, fifty or a hundred at a time. And this bewildering variety of torture was contrived that when the agony became unbearable, apostacy might be induced. The least word of complaint or even a sigh or the most trivial movement of involuntary resistance was hailed as apostacy and greeted by cries of: "He is fallen!"

The marvel is that so few comparatively did fall, and that tens of thousands persevered to the end. How shall we recount the numbers of Japanese mothers that went to martyrdom holding their infants in their arms, and looking on calmly whilst their little ones were hacked to pieces before their eyes? "Nothing could I desire more," said Susanna, "I shall be the mother of a martyr and it will be one sacrifice more to offer to God. If I had a thousand lives, I would sacrifice them with all my heart, for the cause I now defend. You have done well to me and to my child." Added to torture, there were reserved for the women nudity and dishonour. This last so stung to madness the fervent John Naysen that he momentarily apostatised. But won back by his martyr-wife Monica, he died a martyr with her and his two children.

At a city near Omura a brave Christian plunged his hand into burning coals and held it there until charged by the governor to withdraw it. At Hirado fifty young Christians were made to kneel upon burning coals and told that the most involuntary movement would be taken as apostacy. The closest scrutiny could not detect one of them to flinch and half-roasted they were sent back to their homes. In one place a child of seven years of age was tortured for seven days to extort

from him the hiding place of a priest. To every fresh cruelty he would only answer: "Jesus, Mary! how I long to be in heaven with my God." No other word could be extorted from this child, even when they poured boiling lead into his wounds. At last he and his family were burned alive, without one having given any clue to the priest's whereabouts.

In the same territory there was an old man of seventy called Leo Kaizayeman, who, in the absence of the pastors sustained the faith of the Christians. On being summoned before the judge, he answered boldly: "My age and the measures I have taken not to be deceived in the matter of religion, are the strong points in favour of the choice I have made. I hope by the goodness of the God I adore that my death, far from being a motive of terror, may serve as a fresh reason to love more and more the faith of my brethren." Interrupted by the irritated judge, he was ordered to lay himself naked on a bed of live coals. Calmly he stripped himself and lay down on his fiery couch, and turned from side to side, not for relief, but that no part of him might be unconsumed. The judge baffled, retired, allowing the old man to be carried to his family. They all of them were subjected to a similar trial, even a child of four years of age. Half burnt they were sent back to the old man, who, receiving them tenderly, and embracing them, seemed to gain new life in his transports of joy. This is one only of the holocausts which Japan sent up to heaven of whole families sealed and sanctified in the love of God and the love of each other.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THROUGH FIRE AND WATER

**B**UT the torment that was most efficaciously used to enfeeble the faith of the Christians in the kingdom of Arima, was the sulphurous waters of Mount Unzen. This mountain is in Hizen and lies between Nagasaki and Shimabara. It is not high but much extended, and has an aspect as fearful as one of the landscapes of hell in Dante's *Inferno*. Not only is it bald, bleak, and treeless, but of that leprous whiteness which conceals beneath it death. From its summit arises perpetually a thick and stifling smoke that can be seen three miles away. Its steep sides are covered with a soft and spongy soil which burns and trembles and rumbles beneath the footfall. The whole mountain exhales a smell of sulphur so strong that for several miles around no bird would attempt to fly within its tainted atmosphere. In fact, this mountain is a great furnace which sends up fountains of boiling water. It has many peaks which are separated by precipices. Within the clefts and fissures which split this gloomy mountain lie hidden deep and unfathomable pools of boiling water. One of these openings is six feet in diameter, deeper than all the rest and instead of water is filled with a mixture of sulphur and other volcanic matter which seethes and bubbles in its cauldron. So fearful is the stench belched out by this aperture as to have won for it the name of "The Mouth of Hell." One drop alone of this fluid was sufficient to produce an ulcer on human flesh.

The Japanese held in superstitious awe the waters of Unzen and the mysterious caverns in which they boiled. When therefore Bugendono hit on his fiendish device, he felt certain he had discovered an infallible way of intimidating Christians and extirpating their hated religion. There was scattered in Arima at this time a band of faithful confessors who had borne unflinchingly a variety of tortures. Wherever they appeared the Christians received fresh courage, and the weak and apostates returned to the faith. These, then, together with all those lying in prison, were brought even to the Mouth of Hell.

The first to obtain a crown of glory thus was a band of sixteen Christians, at whose head was Paul Ucibori. He had suffered for long years and had witnessed the martyrdom of every member of his family down to the youngest of his children, who was only four years old. When the executioner, sent to cut off the fingers of Paul's two youngest children, asked: "Which shall I begin with?" "That is your affair, not mine," said the tender-



hearted father bluntly, "cut off which you like, and as many as you please. All I ask for my children is courage under suffering." Then these little ones offered their tiny hands to be mutilated and suffered the cutting off of their fingers with a serenity which made the bystanders weep. As little Ignatius watched his brother's fingers falling beneath the knife, he exclaimed: "Oh! how beautiful your hand looks, Brother, thus mutilated for the sake of Jesus Christ! How I long for my own time to come!" And this child was only five years old.

Whilst those around wept, Paul with dry eyes and radiant face embraced his little martyrs. He kissed their wounds, congratulated them on their courage and offered these innocent victims to God as an entire sacrifice. A still more terrible sentence was reserved for Paul Ucibori and twenty others. They were so crippled and crushed by torture that the governor hoped to terrify into acquiescence the Christians who beheld them. But quite the contrary effect was produced; their wounds preached more eloquently than any words; and immense numbers flocked to them for courage and strength. When Paul Ucibori's fingers were cut off he said: "Fear not my brethren, I feel no pain! And I hope you also will feel none." Another martyr, John Faci, fell, through torture, into such a long unconsciousness that they thought him dead. Suddenly awaking as if out of a sleep, he cried: "Where am I? My brethren I am returning from the most delicious sojourn you could ever imagine. I thought I had reached life everlasting. But an unknown person told me that eternal happiness had not yet come for me, and that I must return to you. Then he vanished."

When the King of Arima had heard that many apostates had been reclaimed through the example of Paul Ucibori and his band, he ordered them to be immersed in the boiling waters of Unzen. As the little company approached the Mouth of Hell, one of them, Louis Shinzaburo, at the bidding of the executioner and in the spirit of another Apollonia, rushed forward and flung himself into its depths. But Paul, with a more measured courage, ordered the others to restrain their zeal. When the heathens taunted them with cowardice, he said: "We are not masters of our own lives. To God alone it belongs to take away the life He has given. Calmly to await death needs more courage, in reality, than to put an end to its terrors by rushing into its arms." Each of the martyrs, having been tied with ropes, was slowly lowered into the seething sulphur. Some died at a single immersion. Others, by quick withdrawal, were reserved for a second plunge. But old Paul, who had fired so many with his own courage, was, by a dexterous cruelty, let down three times

into the Mouth of Hell. Each time as he rose to the surface he was heard to exclaim : " Eternal praise to the Ever Adorable Sacrament of the Altar ! " Regretting that his wife was not there to share in his martyrdom, he at last expired.

After this first trial, the scalding bath of Unzen became a favourite mode of torture. Men, women, children, infants, were sent there in crowds. Some expired after a single plunge ; some after two or three immersions. The greater number were tormented by a more exquisite cruelty, and watered day after day with boiling sulphur until their bodies were one mass of sores and putrescence. Joachim Ikeda, one huge wound from head to foot, lingered for seventy days. " What more can they do against you ? " said a compassionate heathen, as he withdrew the cloak of the sufferer and saw beneath one mass of rotteness and corruption. " You can cut open my back," came the curt answer, " and pour boiling sulphur into the wound. Hundreds of other torments there are which you can inflict upon me and which I can bear with gladness for my God." But they were too busy with another prisoner, the Japanese Jesuit, Michael Nagashima. After being sprayed by the waters of Unzen and exposed on a December night to the freezing air, he was at last, after several immersions in the Mouth of Hell, cast into its infernal depths on Christmas day, 1627.

At Amakusa in 1630, thirty children were seized, stripped naked, and cast into an enclosure exposed to the burning rays of the sun. In pity one of the guards brought them food by stealth, but these children refused it, saying they would not diminish their crown. The very flies swarming around seemed to feel an instinctive veneration for their tender virginal bodies. For they touched not one of them. A Dutchman writes that, when he was in Nagasaki in 1626, there were forty thousand Christians in that city, which was once entirely Christian. But in 1630 not one was left of that faithful band. Even of the many who apostatized, several returned to the church as fervent penitents. And it is equally true that many of the apostacies were brought about by mental alienation or aberration caused by intense and prolonged torture.

In 1630, Bugendono, King of Arima, who had first subjected the Christians to the torture of Unzen and had been such a fearful persecutor, perished by the very torment he had invented. Being consumed with intense internal fever, he caused himself to be carried to the sulphur baths of Obama. Now these waters, when properly tempered, have such a marvellous healing power that Christians ulcerated from head to foot had been made whole ; but only to be plunged once again into the boiling pool. But

Bugendono, in the frenzy of his fever, ordered his attendants to put him in the bath as it was. In an instant so completely parboiled was his body, that the flesh fell from his bones before he could be lifted out of the bath. Thus did this cruel monster heap up for himself the same measure of torture that he had inflicted on others. He died shrieking like a demoniac and haunted by the tens of thousands of holy ones he had put to death.

Far from being filled with horror at this terrible end, his successor tried even to surpass him in ferocity. And in this he was supported by his new over-lord the Shogun-Sama, who had about this time succeeded his father. In the third year of his reign from July to October, 1633, no fewer than sixteen priests, besides several religious, principally Jesuits, fell into the hands of the governor of Nagasaki. This monster of vice and cruelty was to give the death-blow to the Church of Japan. For under this Shogun-Sama more victims suffered than in all the years from the beginning of the persecution.

Among the victims of this four-months' slaughter we find the names of Father Ishida, a Japanese Jesuit, and of Father Julian Nicaura, the last survivor of the ambassadors to Rome. Some of his companions preceded him in martyrdom, whilst others died, it is supposed, a natural death. In his infancy, Julian had beheld the Church of Japan waxing in vigour and strength, under the first successors of St. Francis Xavier. In its behalf he had, as a youth, undertaken the embassy to Rome, and afterwards in the Society of Jesus he had for three and forty years zealously served the cause of Christ. His life had passed in unwearied toil and preaching. He had wandered from province to province, from kingdom to kingdom, in search of souls or to elude his pursuers. Broken down and crushed, as much by his bitter sorrows as by his life-long labours for his persecuted brethren, he sealed his faith with his blood. After four nights and days of heroic endurance of the pit, with six other Jesuits, he gave up his great soul to God.

The Japanese Jesuit, Father Ishida, after lying two years in prison, was brought forth before the King of Arima. Unemondo conceived such an esteem and affection for this man that he tried to release him. Under flattery as well as torture, Ishida preserved silence. At last he spoke: "Sir, if you wish to cause me veritable pain, threaten me with life. Because I assure you death and torments are at this moment the only desire of my heart. Do the worst that you can and we shall see who will give in first. I trust not to my own strength, but I put all my trust in Him, who strengthens the weary. And I hope that He will

not abandon me, because it is for Him I go forth to combat." This defiance was accepted, and Ishida was taken to Unzen. There, after all his bones had been dislocated, he was hung up and sprayed for three days with the sulphurous liquid from the Mouth of Hell. Even the executioners were wearied from torturing a man who seemed insensible to pain, and on whose body the boiling waters left not even a scar. Flung back into prison for nine months, he was condemned to be burnt with several priests and other Christians in 1632.

Father Sebastian Vieyra was another of the more remarkable victims of this blood-stained year. He had been sent to Rome ten years before for the purpose of representing to the Pope the disastrous state of the Japanese Church. When he knelt at the feet of Pope Urban VIII he was so overcome with the tale of irretrievable ruin he had to tell that for some time he was unable to speak for the bitterness of his tears and emotion.

The Holy Father mingled his tears with those of the holy missionary and wept even more abundantly when in his letters he read of the sufferings of his Japanese children and their constancy therein. After consoling and blessing Father Vieyra, he said these words: "Go, return to the combat; continue to defend the faith at the peril of your life. And if you are so happy as to shed your blood in defending so good a cause, we shall solemnly place you among the holy martyrs which the Church of Rome reveres." The Pope also promised a fresh supply of missionaries to support the expiring Church of Japan. It was easy enough to find apostles for so hazardous a mission. The Church has never lacked heroism in her priests and pastors. But the difficulty was how they were to be landed in a country which had closed its ports to all Europeans except the Dutch.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE CLOSING TRAGEDY OF SHIMBARA

THIS complete closing of the ports to all, was brought about by the Dutch, who alone were exempted from the imperial edict. Written on notice boards by highways, ferries and mountain passes might have been seen during two hundred years the edict : " So long as the sun shall warm the earth, let no Christian be so bold as to come to Japan ; and let all know that neither the king of Spain himself, nor the Christian God, nor the great God of all, may violate this commandment without paying for it with his head." However, Father Sebastian Vieyra was not the man to be balked, even by the closing of all the ports. With his consummate knowledge of the Japanese language and customs he managed to land, disguised as a sailor, but only in the North of Japan. Twelve months afterwards he and four other Jesuits were arrested and brought prisoners to the capital.

The Shogun-Sama did not see the captive himself ; for admission of a condemned person to the imperial presence was tantamount to a pardon. But he every day sent confidential persons to question him as to his life, his doctrine and his journey. And the more he heard, the more he longed to bring about the release of this man through apostacy. One day he was led into a torture chamber filled with every kind of instrument of destruction and told to choose between them and the gods of Japan. His hands being released and pen and ink brought, he wrote a spirited answer to the monarch. He averred his complete submission to the temporal authority of the emperor, but his spiritual authority he could not accept. He wrote also a short exposition of Christian doctrine, which impressed the Shogun-Sama so greatly that he exclaimed : " This European is a man of wonderful mind. But if what he says of the immortality of the soul be true, what will become of us hereafter ? " So powerfully had grace and the holiness of Father Vieyra affected this monster of vice, that he seemed on the very threshold of Christianity, when he was thrust violently from the entrance by a wicked uncle of his.

Fearing Vieyra's influence on him, this uncle gave him no rest till he signed his death warrant. The priest was condemned to the " Fosse," which of all tortures was the worst and the most dreaded. The martyr, hanging by a rope fastened to the feet and attached to a projecting post, is suspended head downwards into a pit. Blood exuding from the mouth and

nostrils made the suffering excruciating, and the pressure on the brain produced a pain almost unbearable. Yet the victim usually survived eight or nine days. Father Vieyra had told his executioners that he should die by fire. So after three days in the pit, when he was found as strong and vigorous as ever, they lit a fire under him which consumed him in a few hours, 10th June, 1634.

In the following year when the Portuguese anchored at Nagasaki as usual, they found a kind of wooden island, with two rows of wooden houses floating on it before the town, and connected with it by means of a bridge. It was called the Island of Desima, and had been constructed at the instigation of the Dutch to keep them out of Japan. Here only were they allowed to transact business and exchange their merchandize; and to add to this ignominious treatment they were prohibited from displaying a crucifix or any kind of symbol of Christianity.

And now comes the closing tragedy of the Church of Japan, the revolt of Shimabara. Driven to desperation by thirty years of unrelenting persecution, and finally deprived of pastors to exhort them to patience and prudence, is it surprising that the endurance of the Japanese Christians gave way at last? That the revolt was not brought about by Christians, nor in retaliation for persecution is proved by all reliable writers. The revolt was due to the misgovernment and cruel extortions of two successive rulers of Arima and was not originated by religious motives in the first instance. The tyrannized Christians to the number of 40,000 joined it and were besieged at Shimabara for 102 days. After the taking of this stronghold by assault, there ensued that horrible massacre, in which out of that number of 40,000 one only escaped alive. It was Dutch artillery which brought about the victory, and on the Dutch lies the ignominy of the final extinction of Christianity in Japan.

Every attempt made by the Viceroy to open up relations with Japan seemed futile. And when in 1640 an embassy was sent by the government of Portugal from Macao, the vessel was seized, and contrary to the law of nations, well nigh every man on her was put to the sword. The few survivors told the tale of their martyred companions; for life had been offered them on condition of apostacy. To the surviving crew, a chest was given with the bones of their martyred compatriots, on the lid of which was written an inscription: "That so long as the sun shone upon the earth no Christian should be permitted to land in Japan," etc.

But the Church in Japan, however cruelly persecuted, mourned less the loss of her 200,000 martyr-children and 1,000 priests

slain than the falling away of many under the acuteness of torture and of agony excruciatingly prolonged. The apostacy most to be deplored was that of two priests, one a Japanese, Thomas Araki, and the other Christopher Ferreyra, Provincial of the Jesuits and Administrator of the Diocese. The former had been in Rome under the pontificate of Paul V. and acquired a reputation for such sanctity that he was sought after by the most virtuous of the prelates of the Roman court, amongst these Cardinal Bellarmine. Zeal for souls made him return to Japan ; but the sight of the torments inflicted on the Christians caused him to renounce Christianity. For thirty years he lived in his apostacy consumed by bitterest remorse. One day unable to bear any longer the gnawings of remorse, he leaped into the arena where the Christians were being tortured and begged death at the hands of the executioners. But the grace of martyrdom which he had formerly refused was denied him now. With blows and taunts he was chased away into prison, and the after fate of this penitent is unknown.

Father Ferreyra was an old missionary whose zeal and many talents had rendered him most useful on the Japanese mission. But it would seem that living too much in the exterior as he did, he soon lost whatever solid virtue and real fervour he had once had. But this weakening of the inner life did not appear outwardly, and being so learned in Japanese affairs, he was chosen Provincial and Administrator for the Bishop. In 1633 he was arrested and subjected to the trial of the Fosse at Nagasaki. But after five hours he gave the mournful sign of apostacy.

It may be imagined how great was the consternation of the Society at this foul blot on their bright escutcheon. And loud was the elation of their enemies thereat. What need to tell them that four hundred Jesuits had been martyred in one century alone, and of these one hundred in Japan solely ? Was not all this noble blood enough to wipe away one stain ? Would not all the fervour and the self-sacrifice of the noblest blood of the Society obtain the conversion of their one deserter ? And to this torrent of reparation the faithful Japanese joined their prayers and their sufferings ; and the last sighs of the expiring church were offered to heaven on behalf of their faithless shepherds.

Among the heroes who rushed to fill the breach made by Father Ferreyra, one must be especially mentioned. And this not only because of the series of astonishing prodigies which fill his life from childhood to death, but because he was chosen and prepared as the Victim predestined by the great Apostle, St. Francis Xavier himself. Marcello Mastrilli, born in 1630 of

a ducal family, was consecrated from his birth to serve in the Society of Jesus. Whilst he was only a novice, his was a consummate virtue. He often used to say his head would be taken off in Japan, and his mother never spoke of Japan without putting her son amongst its martyrs. Long years before the fall of Ferreyra he would say, Japan also would have its Marcellinus. This Roman martyr had taken the place of an apostate. When helping in the decoration of a church a heavy hammer fell from a height on his head and he was brought to death's door. The end seemed inevitable, and his friends and relations waited around his bed for his last breath. This was two months after the apostacy of Ferreyra. During three weeks of useless torture inflicted by physicians on the dying novice, he was daily visited by St. Francis Xavier, who diffused around the favoured boy the joys of heaven. One day he appeared with a harp and a candle and asked his client to choose one of them. By this he meant that a choice was offered him either of the joys of heaven or to labour among pagans in diffusing the light of the faith. Mastrilli said he desired only the Will of God. Nevertheless, he made a vow in the hands of the Provincial that if he recovered his health he would go to Japan. For a few days he was deprived of his heavenly consoler, during which he grew worse and seemed reduced to an extremity. The agony bell was rung and friends and relations were round his bed to receive his last sigh. Hearing him speak about a great light in the room and St. Francis Xavier in the middle of it, the bystanders thought it the ravings of delirium.

But a heavenly visitant was really there. Asking the dying boy whether he was still faithful to the vow he had made, St. Francis Xavier told him to apply to his head the relic of the True Cross which was under his pillow. Whilst holding it, he desired him to repeat this prayer in Latin: "I salute you Sacred Wood! Precious Cross! and Thee my Divine Saviour Who has stained it with Thy Precious Blood! I consecrate myself to Thee entirely forever. I humbly beseech Thee to grant me the grace to shed for Thy Holy Name the last drop of my blood, a grace which the Apostle of the Indies, after so many labours could not obtain. I renounce my parents, my home, my country, my friends, and everything which could in any way hinder my mission to the Indies; and I consecrate myself wholly to the salvation of souls, in the presence of my Father, St. Francis Xavier." Then the Vision disappeared, leaving young Mastrilli cured. The cry, "A miracle," went through the house. All went to the infirmary to chant the *Te Deum*. The dying Jesuit dressed himself, and as he had foretold, said Mass the next day.



Four years after this cure, after long journeyings and delays, the young missionary arrived at last, disguised as a Japanese on the longed-for shores of Japan. "I have a baptism wherewith I have to be baptised and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" might be an expression of the longing with which Mastrilli longed for the consummation of his sacrifice.

When at Goa, he had knelt with transports of delight at the tomb of the Great Apostle. In his hands he placed a note written with his blood, in which he declared he was his disciple and servant for ever. No sooner was the landing of the missionary noised abroad, than two hundred soldiers were sent after him. He was at last discovered praying in a wood, and so great was the majesty of the young priest, that unable to move, they kept gazing at him. "If it is I you seek, here I am, arrest me": he said in the sweetest of tones. And when they laid hands on him the ground beneath them trembled. When he was taken before the governor at Nagasaki, all were astounded to see a circle of light around his head. On being interrogated, he boldly declared that he had come to Japan to preach the Gospel and to cure the emperor, who was then dangerously ill. This he would do by the relic of St. Francis Xavier, who had laboured so greatly for Japan. After a fortnight in prison, with alternations of torture of many kinds, he was condemned to the trial of the Pit on the 14th October. With all the ignominy of another Champion he was conducted to the Holy Mountain on horseback. As the executioners tightly corded his body he predicted that it was by the sword he would die, not by the Pit. After three days of this fearful trial he was found so hale and hearty that he was cut down in order to be decapitated. Something in the majesty of the martyr filled the executioners with such fear that they could not fulfil their task, until invited by the saint to do so. As he uttered the names of Jesus and Mary his head was severed from his body. In that instant the earth trembled, and from a serene sky a black cloud arose and covered the whole palace of the governor as with a pall. When one of the Jesuits had begged the young saint to stay in the Philippines which offered so vast a field for his zeal, whilst Japan was closed to the missionary, he answered that St. Francis Xavier had sent him to Japan, not so much to labour as to wash out with his blood the stain made by Ferreyra on the Church and on the Society.

What was Ferreyra doing? Living like a Japanese, with a Japanese name, in indigence and remorse, scorned by the very pagans, who flouted him with his cowardice, when thousands of women and children had held firm. They were truly the valiant ones who taste of death but once; but this coward

died many times before his death, and in fact during the twenty years of his apostacy he led a dying life. Though he was used as interpreter during the trials of his own Brethren and the Christians, in one thing he remained inflexible. He never discovered the haunts of the Missioners. When ninety years of age and tottering on the brink of the grave, Ferreyra received the grace of repentance. So deep was it that he desired to shed every drop of his blood in atonement. Because of his senile weakness, he was conveyed to the Holy Mountain and there this old man hung for five days in the torture he had dreaded so much, and on account of which he had apostatized. Of himself he had been unable twenty years ago to bear this torment for five hours. Now in the divine strength given him by the blood of Mastrilli, he hung for three days blessing Christ with his last breath, and confessing His Holy Name. This was in 1652.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## DESPERATE EFFORTS TO LAND IN JAPAN

**S**T. FRANCIS XAVIER'S thirst for martyrdom seems to have been bequeathed in overflowing measure, not only to his Brethren in the Society and successors in the Japanese Mission, but likewise to his beloved children of that country. One thousand religious of the four orders, Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians had—after unheard-of torments—shed their blood for the faith; 200,000 Japanese lay-folk with unparalleled heroism had upheld that same faith and died, yet we hear of one missionary after another attempting, during sixty years, this hazardous undertaking.

In 1643 Father Rubino, a Jesuit, with four companions succeeded in landing at Satsuma. But they had not been two days in the country when they were arrested. First they were made to suffer the torment of water and fire, by which they were burnt all over the body with red-hot irons. Skilful physicians were there to heal their wounds, but only in view to a renewal of their torture, which went on for five months. After a year they were condemned to the trial of the Pit. So vivid was their joy on hearing their sentence that the governor imagining that they had not heard it, caused it to be read again. The martyrs aware of the mistake, hastened to assure the chief that they knew well enough their fate, and they rejoiced therein because of their approaching union with God. They all remained firm and unshaken to the end, some lingering as long as nine days in this agony of suspension. This martyrdom was soon followed by that of Father Marquez and four other Jesuits. For the details of their martyrdom we are indebted to the Dutch, who identified them and witnessed their death. "The Jesuits were seated on miserable mats," says Haren, "their faces pale and emaciated, eyes dim and sunken, hands blackened and purpled, bodies all bruised with the horrible tortures to which they had been subjected. To the questions put to them by the judges, they answered with great courage and firmness. Their limbs being sawn off one by one by order of the Shogun-Sama, those who did not sink at once under the torture were taken back to prison where they expired."

At the beginning of the century, the young Church in Japan, which had counted 1,800,000 souls, seemed at its close to be absolutely extinct. But one more attempt was to be made to carry away the golden apples of this garden of the Hesperides. And the daring hero was an Italian Jesuit, John Sidotti. He seems to have been the last Jesuit who has trodden Japanese soil,

and his attempt the last we have to record. From his early years he was attracted to this perilous mission. After having spent many years in the study of the language, he got a mission from the Pope to go and preach in that kingdom. To perfect himself in Japanese, two more years were spent in Manilla. Here every facility for work was given by the governor of the Philippines, who even fitted up a ship for his use.

He was already within landing distance of Japan, when a fishing smack hove in sight. The native idolater who had accompanied him on the voyage was sent to try and bribe the fisherman. He does not seem to have been successful, for on his return he tried to dissuade the priest from landing. But the very sight of Japan, which had been soaked with the blood of martyrs, fired Father Sidotti with zeal to labour and die there. Indeed, he protested to the captain that nothing would hinder him from his purpose. Therefore arrangements were made for landing him at midnight. The Missioner spent the time in writing letters and in making a farewell discourse to the crew. He asked pardon of them for any scandal he had given them, in atonement for which he kissed the feet of every one on board. At midnight the captain conducted him in a little boat to the shore. As soon as the Missioner touched land he threw himself on his knees and devoutly kissed the ground, thanking God for having brought him at length to the land of his desires. Pressing some gold pieces on the captain he bade an affectionate farewell. Hardly had the captain reached his ship when Father Sidotti was seized as a prisoner, and set on his way to Nagasaki. The Dutch describe him as a tall pale man, with black hair and about forty years of age. He wore a Japanese robe and a chain around his neck from which hung a crucifix. In his hands, which were manacled, was his rosary and under his arm a couple of books. In perfect Japanese he answered all the questions put to him and the reasons for his setting foot in Japan. He was afterwards sent to Yeddo, where he lingered in prison for several years. As he converted everyone who came near him, he was immured in a cavity from four to five feet in depth, food being supplied from an opening in the top. After suffering for long years this excruciating torture, he died from the protracted agony. From the hour of his death darkness black as night settled on the country and no missioner put foot on the soil for 150 years. For not only to priests were the ports closed, but to all foreigners. And to debar utterly the entrance of Christians into the kingdom, the ceremony of the Yebumi was instituted or the trampling underfoot of the crucifix and the image of Our Lady. Ye= picture ; bumi=to tread upon.



Once a year every Japanese was subjected to this horrible sacrilege, the invention of Satan. It consisted of treading on two brass plates, on one of which was a crucifix, and on the other an image of Our Lady. And no merchant nor trader could enter Japan without submitting to the Yebumi and thus repudiating Christianity. Needless to say, only the Dutch were guilty of this fearful profanation. By a singular Nemesis and retribution, they were themselves banished to the Isle of Desima, in which they had caused the Portuguese to be interned. And instead of getting the trade for which they bartered their souls, it dwindled away completely from them. The very pagans jeered at men, who for gold had sold both their bodies and their souls.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE SECOND SPRING IN JAPAN

WITH the fall of Shimabara, 1638—1640, Christianity in Japan might be said to be dead and buried. But could a passion such as the Japanese Church had sustained have been futile? Could all that torrent of blood have been shed in vain? "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into His glory?" said He who was the Conqueror of death on Easter morning. A similar exultation would have filled the breasts of the Japanese martyrs, when after the death-silence of two centuries, they saw Christianity emerge victorious from the tomb. How many a missionary had ventured forth to roll away the stone from the door of that sepulchre! But the stone was exceeding great and the guards watched it most diligently. "Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" Now this was how it happened.

When the Church of Japan was in her death throes, there was being formed in Paris the greatest missionary society known, that of the illustrious Société des Missions Etrangères. It had strictly no founders, unless we claim that title for its two first Vicars Apostolic for the Far East, Mgr. Palla and Mgr. de la Motte Lambert, appointed by Alexander VII in 1658. The aim of this Society was to preach the Gospel to the heathen and to train a native clergy in every foreign mission entrusted to it. Annam, Tonquin, Siam were the first countries evangelized by the members of the new Society. And it was in the kingdom of Siam that the first seminary for native clergy was erected. Very early in its foundation did the Society fix its eyes on the Forbidden Land, and two of its first missionary Bishops, Mgr. Laneau and Mgr. Cicé received the barren title of Vicars Apostolic of Japan. In 1821 occurred an incident which excited much interest and curiosity. Some twenty Japanese sailors were shipwrecked on the shores of the Philippines; and the Spaniards who received them kindly were surprised to find them wearing Christian medals, which they held in great veneration. They were found to be all baptised and instructed, being the descendants of the ancient Christians of Japan. In the following year Gregory XVI erected the Vicariate Apostolic of Korea, attaching to it the Liu-Kiu islands, dependencies of Japan.

In 1838 the Society of Foreign Missions ventured to send some catechists into Japan, and Mgr. Imbert writing on November 22nd, the two-hundredth anniversary of Shimabara, says, "Often do I turn my eyes and even my hopes to the shores of Japan!" In the meanwhile the various governments were trying hard to

open up commercial relations with the Land of Promise. In 1844 and 1846, after much diplomatic negotiation, some missionaries were allowed to land. But they were installed in a Buddhist Llamasery and subjected to every sort of vexatious surveillance. In 1846 Gregory XVI went a step further in appointing M. Forcade Bishop of Samos and Vicar Apostolic of Japan. In 1844 he had seen from the mast of the ship *Alcmène* the land of his desires. But when he landed with his catechist he found his lot no better than that of a captivity that was not even honourable.

In 1854, Fathers Colin, Libois, and Gerard, made further efforts to labour in Japan, but the State frustrated any possibility of evangelization. In the meantime the Admirals and Commodores of their respective governments ceased to knock gently at the gates of Japan. They hammered so loudly and incessantly that the ports had to be opened. It was Commodore Perry of the United States who achieved this diplomatic victory. In 1854 America opened up successful commercial relations with the Island Empire. In the same year treaties followed with Great Britain, in 1855 with Russia, in 1856 with Holland, each providing for the admission of traders to two Japanese ports.

In 1858 Baron Grou finally opened the ports of Yokohama, Nagasaki, and Hakodate to the French and the Missionaries of the French Society. But religious liberty was not yet allowed to the natives but only to foreigners. On November 28th Mgr. Giraud writes as Pro-Vicar Apostolic of Japan to the Central Council of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith: "After ten years of waiting and painful uncertainty about the future of a mission always dear to us, to behold the gates at length opened, is an event in which we cannot fail to see the direct intervention of Almighty God. The treaty awards to the Minister Plenipotentiary the right of travelling all over the empire. We hope that one of us may be able to accompany him, and seek out the remnants of the ancient Christian settlements, said still to exist in Japan."

In Rome on Whitsunday 1862, Pius IX, amid an extraordinary gathering of Bishops from all parts of the world, had the consolation, of solemnly proclaiming the Canonisation of the twenty-six proto-martyrs of Japan. Three years after, on February 19th, on the very scene of their martyrdom, was opened a fine church which was dedicated to them. The church had been built by M. Bernard Petitjean of the Missions Etrangères, who had been sent to Japan in 1860. This new church excited general admiration and attracted a great concourse of visitors, and may be considered as the rolling away of the stone. In this wonderful

discovery of the ancient church of Japan, let us quote the words of the great M. Bernard Petitjean: "Scarce had a month elapsed since the benediction of the church at Nagasaki. On March 17th, 1865, about half-past twelve, some fifteen persons were standing at the church door. Urged no doubt by my Angel Guardian, I went up and opened the door. I scarce had time to say a Pater, when three women between fifty and sixty years of age knelt down beside me, and said in a low voice, placing their hand upon their heart: 'The hearts of all us here do not differ from yours.' 'Indeed,' I exclaimed, 'Whence do you come?' They mentioned their village, adding: 'At home every body is the same as we are.' Blessed be Thou, O my God! for all the happiness which filled my soul. What a compensation for the five years of barren ministry! Scarce had our dear Japanese opened their hearts to us than they displayed an amount of trustfulness which contrasts strangely with the behaviour of their pagan brethren. I was obliged to answer all their questions and to talk to them of O Deous-Sama, O Iesus-Sama, and Santa Maria-Sama, by which names they design God, Jesus Christ, and the Blessed Virgin. The view of the statue of the Madonna and Child recalled Christmas to them, which they said they had celebrated in the eleventh month (for February begins the year in the old Japanese calendar). They asked me if we were not at the seventeenth day of the Time of Sadness (*i.e.* Lent); nor was St. Joseph unknown to them; they call him O Iesus-Samana yo fu, 'the adoptive father of our Lord.'

In the midst of this volley of questions footsteps were heard; immediately all dispersed. But as soon as the new-comers were recognized all returned, laughing at their fright. 'They are people of our village,' they said, 'they have the same hearts as we have.' However, we had to separate for fear of wakening the suspicions of the officials, whose visits we feared. On Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, April 13th and 14th, 1,500 people visited the Church of Nagasaki. The presbytery was invaded; the faithful took the opportunity of satisfying their devotion before the crucifix and the statue of Our Lady. During the early days of May the missionaries learnt of the existence of 2,500 Christians scattered in the neighbourhood of the city. On May 15th there arrived delegates from an island not very far from here. After a short interview, we dismissed them, detaining only the Catechist and the leader of the pilgrimage. The Catechist, named Peter, gave us the most valuable information. Let me first say that his formula for baptism does not differ at all from ours and that he pronounces it very distinctly.



He declares that there are many Christians left, up and down all over Japan. He cited in particular one place where there are over 1,000 Christian families. He then asked us about the Great Chief of the Kingdom of Rome, whose name he desired to know. When I told him that the Vicar of Christ, the saintly Pius IX, would be very happy to learn the consoling news given us by himself and his fellow countrymen, he gave full expression to his joy. Nevertheless, before leaving he wished to make quite sure that we were the true successors of the ancient missionaries. 'Have you no children?' he asked timidly. 'You and all your brethren, Christian and heathen, of Japan, are the children whom God has given us. Other children we cannot have. The priest must, like your first apostles, remain all his life unmarried.' At this reply Peter and his companion bent their heads down to the ground and cried out: 'They are celibate. Thank God!' Next day an entire Christian village invited the Missioner to visit them. Two days later 600 more Christians sent a deputation to Nagasaki. By June 8th the missionaries had learnt the existence of twenty-five 'Christianities,' and seven 'Baptizers' were put into direct relation with them."

In this marvellous episode, how the prophetic words of St. Francis Xavier were verified: "As far as I know, the Japanese is the only nation which seems likely to preserve, unshaken and for ever, the profession of Christian holiness if once it embraces it." During 200 years without priests, without sacramental help, they had fed and fostered the sacred fire of the True Faith and cherished tenderly the memory of that army of their martyrs who had died for that Faith. Pius IX wept for joy when he heard of this almost miraculous event of March 17th, 1865, and established a feast with the rank of a greater double to be celebrated for ever in Japan under the title of "The Finding of the Christians." And he who was the privileged discoverer of these faithful ones of Christ was nominated by the same Pontiff in the following year Bishop of Myrophitus and Vicar Apostolic of Japan.

The first act of the new Bishop was to erect a statue to "Our Lady of Japan," and in the same year 1867, Pius IX beatified 205 more of the early Japanese martyrs. But Christianity was still a proscribed religion, forbidden under pain of death. So the joy of the discovery was followed by a fresh edict of persecution displayed on the notice-boards in public places. "The evil sect called Christian is strictly prohibited. Suspicious persons should be reported, and rewards will be given." It is reckoned that between 1868—1873 from 6,000 to 8,000 Christians were torn from their families and deported. Many

were subjected to such cruel torture that 2,000 died in prison in consequence. Coincident with this persecution, Japan was convulsed by a revolution which resulted in a political change, the most momentous during seven centuries. The system of Shogunate government, which had lasted seven centuries, was abolished and the imperial power was wholly vested in the Mikado, who became not only nominal head of the State, but actual Ruler of Japan.

On March 14th, 1873, the religious persecution ceased and all the Christian prisoners were released, though the missionaries were not yet allowed to penetrate into the interior. Yet the missionaries kept increasing, the number in 1895 was ninety-eight in comparison with 1860, when they were three. In the wake of the missionaries came the nuns; the first Societies being those of St. Paul of Chartres and the Child Jesus. Native postulants began entering, and the first native nun was Agatha Kataoka Fükü, the sister and daughter of martyrs, whose life was shortened in consequence of early ill-usage. Japanese nuns have kept steadily on the increase and the Japanese clergy keep growing and are already at work. It was in 1883 that the first Japanese priest was ordained. "If," says Louvet, "in the hour of trial this heroic Church—which was able with mere catechists to preserve the Faith—had had a native clergy, it is probable that Japan would at the present day be well-nigh Christian."

In 1876 Pius IX divided the Vicariate of Japan into two, a North and South Vicariate. Leo XIII created a third Vicariate, Central Japan, and in 1891 the new Vicariate of Hakodate by dividing that of North Japan.

Twenty-five years after the wonderful discovery of March 17th, 1865, there was held the first Provincial Synod; and strange to say its sitting was conducted near the tomb of the discoverer, Bishop Petitjean, and in the very church he had built at Nagasaki. Who could have predicted a quarter of a century ago that his casual meeting with a few old women who were saying the Hail Mary would have resulted in this imposing gathering of four bishops, with over thirty missionaries and native priests? And who could have dreamed that the matter under discussion was to be the creation of the hierarchy in Japan. This crowning act was the work of Leo XIII, and was effected by his Apostolic Letter dated June 15th, 1891. In this he refers in his usual gracious manner, to the courtesy of justice "shown by the present Japanese Government towards Catholic missionaries, and especially to the interchange of amenities between the Holy See and the Mikado." For the latter had solemnly received Mgr. Osouf

in 1885 with an autograph from Leo XIII, expressing the Pontiff's gratitude at the benevolent disposition of the Japanese Government ; and in his turn had deputed a diplomatist to Rome to offer his imperial congratulations on the occasion of the Pope's sacerdotal jubilee. Further marks of the Mikado's enlightened toleration were his release of the Vicar General, Mgr. Ridel, in 1877, and his imperial decree of August 11th, 1884, disestablishing Buddhism and Shintoism, and declaring the Bonzes to be no longer State officials. Judging from the signs of our own times, we may ask what are the prospects of the Catholic Church in the Japan of the twentieth century? What is her attitude political and intellectual in the light of recent events? We shall answer the question in the words of Mgr. Rey, of the Foreign Missions, Archbishop of Tokyo. Interviewing the lecturers of the Franciscan Missions of Quebec, in July—August, 1924, he says: "Socialism and Bolshevism are becoming dangerous to a State which derives its strength from ancestor-worship and from an absolute loyalty to the sovereign. The evil is perhaps less than some assert, but the introduction of the new doctrines which agitate the whole world does not fail to make intelligent Japanese anxious about the future of their country. Till now they would have nothing to do with Christianity. At last they fully realize that Christianity alone can check the evil, which Buddhism and Shintoism are powerless to stem. Thoughtful men in Japan fully recognise the great power of the Papacy in the world and it is a secret known by every one that the government wishes to enter into official relations with the Holy See. Most ardently do we look forward to the day which shall be the beginning of a new era in the Catholic life of Japan."

In May—June, 1924, Mgr. Castanier writes in the *Annals of the Foreign Missions*: "We are happy to announce a slow but continuous progress of our dear Japan towards the truth. Doubtless one cannot say that there is a very decided movement towards conversions. But several signs give reason to hope that the time, so long and so ardently looked forward to, is near at hand. These favourable signs one observes above all in the scientific world. For example, how much one is impressed by the fact that for some time learned men have been attracted to study the history of the Evangelization of Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some eminent professors of the University of Tokyo have made a speciality of these studies. They have just published the result of their researches in the *Historical and Archaeological Bulletin of the University* and accorded to those an entire volume (Vol. VI), illustrated by

forty fine engravings. It suffices to read the Bulletin to see clearly that these researches have been undertaken and pursued in a spirit favourable to Christianity . . . . If from the learned world we descend to the mass of men of ordinary intellect and to men in the journalistic world, we find the same favourable signs. Even Catholic terminology is insensibly finding its way into the idiom of the language. Year by year obstacles, prejudices, and old-world calumnies lose their force and minds and hearts draw nearer to us. And if we cast a glance at the daily life of the people, how many little details, at first sight insignificant, show us that they are becoming more and more favourable to Christianity."

The chief event of the year which has just ended is the project formed by the Japanese government of contracting diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Only ten years ago who could have foretold a similar event? It is true that for the moment the government has had to withdraw its project in consequence of the opposition of the Bonzes. To the foreigner the success of Buddhism seems a surprise. To us it appears only a momentary success. Our mission of Osaka is perhaps better placed than any other to enable us to observe what passes in high Buddhistic spheres. Kyoto, a large town in our diocese, is for Japan the Buddhist centre, its sects insinuating themselves amongst the population of the whole country. Each sect forms a sort of religious order, having its mother-house at Kyoto, whence she governs her provinces and her convents. It is there that has been engineered all the opposition to the sending of a representative from Japan to the Vatican. At first all the Bonzes were not opposed to the plan. The heads of the powerful sect Hongwanji were the chief promoters of the movement. Their historical connection with the Imperial family and their distinguished matrimonial alliances gave to the chief Bonze of this sect a considerable power. On this account they have treated the Bonzes of the other sects with a haughtiness not to the taste of the latter, and hence they have lost their support. If we are to believe the inhabitants of Kyoto, this campaign will cost the sect of Hongwanji the sum of 400,000 yen or more than three million francs. Amongst the people, the campaign of the Bonzes has had some success in arousing the curiosity of the well-meaning masses concerning the Pope, who to them is the great Unknown . . . The public Press either supports the project of the government or is altogether silent. For the people have grasped the fact that the Pope and the Catholic religion hold a place in the world much more important than they had hitherto imagined. Already one foresees that the project



of the government will be carried out sooner or later. There is division in the ranks of the adversaries; a list has been published of the Buddhist associations which have been won over to the project and the great sect of the Hongwanji has everywhere announced that they are sending to Rome one of their great personages that he may study the question of the Papacy. More than one is of opinion that this figure-head has received orders to give, as the result of his investigations, plausible reasons for discontinuing the opposition without any loss of dignity to the Bonzes."

The *Catholic Mission* of May 23rd, 1924, says: "A monument to St. Francis Xavier has been erected in a square of the town of Yamaguchi in the Vicariate Apostolic of Hiroshima, erected last year by the dismemberment of the diocese of Osaka and confided to the care of the Jesuit Fathers of the German Province. The land was given by the government of the Province of Yamaguchi. The expenses of the monument have been met by subscription. The General of the Society of Jesus sent £1,000. A Chinese Christian offered 3,000 francs. The first Minister, General Twanchi, encouraged the project. Several ministers and distinguished personages contributed to the subscription. The monument is composed of a granite cross with a bust of St. Francis Xavier placed at the intersection of the arms of the Cross."

In the *Figaro* of 23rd April, 1924, M. G. Goyau published an article on the French religious movement in Japan: "It is thirty years since Père Heinrich, a Frenchman from Alsace, and belonging to the Congregation of the Marianistes, settled in Japan in order to found a college. At the end of last summer the Morning Star in Tokyo and the college in Yokohama were reduced in a few moments to a heap of ashes. When it became known in Japan that the great scholastic establishment, the Morning Star, had ceased to exist, Japanese voices were raised in spite of the magnitude of the national disaster. It was demanded that a public appeal should be made to Japan for the restoration of an establishment so beneficial to the youth of Japan. In the list of subscribers appear names important as those of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the War Minister, and for the Law Courts; the President of the University of Tokyo and three of his colleagues; professors of medicine, of law and of philosophy. Side by side with these the Governor of Corea, a Maritime Prefect, a Rear-Admiral, and two Bank Directors. Typified by these men we see political, literary, military and financial Japan, who without delay make an urgent

appeal to their devastated country in behalf of a few French priests."

How strangely such munificence and generosity compares with the mentality of Japan eighty-five years ago, when a Missioner was not even allowed to land upon her shores. It is reckoned that the subscriptions raised in Japan alone, which already exceeds a million francs, will suffice to re-erect the college so much beloved of the Morning Star.

The *Catholic Times* (August number, 1924), the organ of the Japanese Catholic youth, announces that the Japanese government at the request of Mgr. Giardini, Apostolic Delegate of Japan, had decided to take part officially in the Exhibition of the Missions which is to be held in Rome in the palace of the Vatican during the Holy Year. With this object, a committee has been formed composed of M. J. Shimomura, Prefect of Religious Affairs, Rear-Admiral Yamamoto, President of Catholic youth, M. G. Tanabashi, Director of the Imperial Museum of Tokyo, and several others, for the collection and despatch of objects to interest the public curious about religious customs in Japan. Thus Japanese Catholics find themselves protected and assisted by their own government in their co-operation with the project so dear to the heart of the Sovereign Pontiff. It is a project which will be most important in its results for the future of the Catholic Missions of the whole world.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## BRIGHT STREAKS OF MORNING ON THE HORIZON

"**P**ASS over and help us!" Such is the cry of Catholic Japan to her brethren all over the world. Shall we who are of the household of the faith turn a deaf ear to the cry? Shall we not rather like St. Paul hasten straightway to secure the Good Tidings for those who are ready to hear them?

True it is that few of us are called to be missionaries. But every follower of Christ must needs have an apostolic spirit and be consumed with desire that the Kingdom of Christ be extended to the furthestmost parts of the world. This is best done by prayer. St. Teresa by fervent prayer converted 30,000. Therefore the more ardent the prayer, the greater the volume of prayer that ascends, the more certain will be the conquests desired. For it is prayer that fortifies the heart of the missionary. It is prayer that nerves his arm to work and his spirit to endure the hardships of the missionary campaign. It is prayer that provides all those material things which the missionary needs to set up tabernacles in the wilderness.

In the days of prowess and chivalry an army of children banded together in what was called the Children's Crusade, to win back the Holy Sepulchre. Now Young Japan, determined that Christ shall reign in the Kingdom of the Rising Sun, has organized a similar movement. And this one will not fail like its proto-type, for it is based on the divine promise: "Ask and ye shall receive! Seek and ye shall find? Knock and it shall be opened to you!"

What grounds have we for this unshaken trust? Where exactly does Catholicism stand now in Japan? The Island-Empire, comprising Corea and Formosa, has a population of 79,000,000. Of these only 190,000 are Catholics. The rest are pagans, excepting some 120,000 who are either Protestants or schismatics. These numbers are certainly not a little disconcerting, especially when we consider the power of the contending forces. In addition to Buddhism and Shintoism or emperor-worship, there are the evil systems of our own day, materialism, socialism, Bolshevism, to say nothing of Protestantism with its wide extended and well-financed propaganda. But the little leaven of Catholicism in Japan has that within it that can leaven the whole mass of paganism, if we but add to it the propelling force of prayer.

But why this urgency to convert Japan above other pagan nations? Because everything points to Japan being the leading Power in the Far East. For not only does she outstrip her neigh-

bours as a sea and land power, but she is likewise supreme in the realm of science, of commerce and of industrial efficiency. Her conversion would mean that of the whole of the Far East and of Southern Asia, whose population together with Japan makes up a billion. But how is this immense work to be achieved? Chiefly by prayer, by united prayer that goes up from Catholic hearts all over the world in a close Union of Prayer called the League of Prayer. This League was founded by a group of young Japanese Catholics under the presidency of Rear-Admiral Shinjiro Yamamoto of the Japanese Navy. In 1918 Benedict XV deigned to impart a very special blessing to all those who by work or prayer should contribute to the League, and he enriched with indulgences the beautiful prayer to the Morning Star.

The leaflet with picture and prayer has been translated into six languages (Japanese, Italian, French, Spanish, English, German), and 40,000 copies distributed all over the world. At the present moment the League possesses centres of propaganda in Italy (Rome and Venice), France (Paray-le-Monial), Spain (Madrid and Barcelona), England (York), Austria (Innsbrück), Holland (Emmerich), and numerous religious communities recite the prayer daily.

The members of the League, besides praying for pagan Japan in general, pray especially for their own missionaries. In gratitude for this spiritual alms to their country, the young Japanese of the League have organized in Japan re-unions of prayer for the intentions of the Leaguers all over the world. Thus there is cemented among a variety of races that link so peculiarly Catholic which we call the Communion of Saints. Let us not only believe in it, but enter into it.

To still further strengthen this spirit, the Directors of the League are forming a publication where details of interest concerning the League in all parts of the world will be given. But as nothing so hastens the conversion of a country as a native clergy, the League intends, with the blessing of the Holy Father, to start shortly a campaign of prayer for the increase of vocations to the priesthood and the religious life among the natives. The invocation used will be that composed at Paray-le-Monial, 1920, by the much-lamented Abbé Fontaine, Curé of St. Antoine, Paris. "Sacred Heart of Jesus, Who thirsteth for souls, deign to send down on the Empire of Japan Your Spirit of faith and love, so that this people may know You, may love You and may become your apostles!"

Since the establishment of the League, the position of the Church has strengthened considerably in Japan. If the number



of converts is not great, the quality of the few gives ground for much hope. For it points undoubtedly to the fact that Catholicism is gradually penetrating into the ranks of the aristocracy, into the governmental and professorial classes, into the army and navy, where important posts are already held by Catholics; and above all into the very brain of Japan, the Universities.

Is it not a little significant that in the three large Universities of Tokyo, classes for Catholic studies have been formed during the last three years with the enthusiastic co-operation of professors and students? In May, 1924, this movement was extended to the University of Hokkaido in North Japan. And what is most consoling of all, native vocations are actually on the increase and many young professors and students with university degrees have entered the priesthood and the religious life.

Finally in view of the upheaval of Europe and the cataclysm of nations, Japan has discovered that in the Papacy alone is the centre of equilibrium for the world. She has learnt that on this principle of authority is based security and happiness for the individual and stability for the State. Hence her determination to enter into diplomatic relations with the Holy See, whatever may be the opposition of the Bonzes. Do not all these signs point to the fulfilment of our Lord's words: "There are yet four months and then the harvest cometh. Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and see the countries, for they are white already for harvest." It is the harvesters only that are needed, but He will send them if we "pray to the Lord of the harvest to send harvesters into His harvest." May the martyrs of Japan hasten the ripening and the reaping of that harvest which they have watered with their blood! May St. Francis Xavier, the Great Sower, once more go forth in the person of his missionaries, to carry in the sheaves rejoicing! But however bright the streaks of morning, the night has not yet gone. May the Morning Star herself dispel the darkness of Japan's long night and usher in the splendour of the Orient Light of Justice!

"O Mary, bright Morning Star, who in thy very appearance upon earth didst signify the speedy rising of the Sun of Justice and of Truth; shine sweetly upon the people of Japan, so that shaking off the darkness of their minds, they may faithfully acknowledge the brightness of Eternal Light, Thy Son our Lord, Jesus Christ." Amen.

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